

AGRICULTURE, DIVERSIFICATION, ENVIRONMENT, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

February 20, 2024

Online Only via TEAMS

RECONVENE: 1:34 p.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Chair
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member

EXCUSED: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U'u-Hodgins, Member

STAFF:

Samantha Tanck, Legislative Analyst
Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst
Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary
Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary
Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney
Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk

Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office
Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna'i Residency Area Office
Zhantell Lindo, Council Aide, Moloka'i Residency Area Office
Bill Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

Kate Griffiths, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Johnson
Axel Beers, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Johnson
Don Atay, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sinenci
Evan Dust, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Michele McLean, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Lee
Angela Lucero, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Paltin
Haunani Madela, Executive Assistant to Councilmember
Rawlins-Fernandez
Sarah Sexton, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez
Laura McDowell, Executive Assistant to Councilmember U'u-Hodgins
Stacy Takahashi, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Cook

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ADMIN.: Michael Hopper, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel
Luana Mahi, Director, Office of Economic Development
Aaron “Tuki” Drake, Economic Development Specialist, Office of Innovation and Sustainability
Maria Ornellas, Economic Development Specialist, Office of Innovation and Sustainability
John Stufflebean, Director, Department of Water Supply
Eva Blumenstein, Planning Program Manager, Department of Water Supply
Robert De Robles, Planner, Department of Water Supply

OTHERS: Darla Palmer-Ellingson, Chief Executive Officer, 360 Green Living
Jay Penniman, Project Manager, Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project
Lori Buchanan, Coordinator at Moloka‘i, Maui Invasive Species Committee, University of Hawaii, Pacific Cooperative Studies
Teya Penniman, Maui Invasive Species Committee, University of Hawaii, Pacific Cooperative Studies
Chelsea Arnott, Hawaii Invasive Species Council Coordinator, Wildlife and Forestry Division, Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawaii
Niklos Dudley – Hawaii Agriculture Research Center
Michael Reyes
Dick Mayer
Dan Eisenberg
Alex de Roode
Charlene Schulenberg
Red Skelton (aka Jasee Law)
(4) additional attendees

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

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Aloha and welcome back. Talofa lava. Will the reconvened Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, and Public Transportation Committee meeting of February 8th, 2024, please come back to order. The date is Tuesday, February 20th and the time is now 1:34 p.m. Members, in accordance with Sunshine Law, if you're not in the Council Chamber, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today. Minors do not need to be identified. All right. So, also please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity and reminder to silence all cell phones. Good afternoon, everyone. I look forward to continuing chairing a productive meeting. I'm Gabe Johnson, your Committee Chair. Also joining us with today...also joining us today is Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci. Aloha.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Chair and talofa lava.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Followed...aloha, Councilmember. Following is Council Chair Alice Lee. Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aloha, kākou and taloha (*phonetic*)...taloha (*phonetic*) . . .(*chuckle*). . .talofa lava.

CHAIR JOHNSON: There it is. Nice. And next, we have Committee Member Tom Cook. Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Talofa lava, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Followed by Committee Member Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha ‘auinala, Chair. Mai Moloka‘i Nui A Hina. I'm at the Moloka‘i District Office, alone on my side of the office, ready to work.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Committee Member Yuki Lei Sugimura is excused today and Committee Member Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins is also excused. Let's see here. Now we got...we always want to invite our Non-Voting Committee Members, Councilmember Tasha Kama as well as Councilmember Tamara Paltin. From the Administration, we have joining us today the Office of Economic Development, Luana Mahi, the Director; Office of Innovation and Sustainability, Office of the Mayor, "Tuki" Drake, Developmental Specialist; Department of Water Supply, Eva Blumenstein, Planning Program Manager; and Robert De Robles, Planner VI; and from Corporation Counsel we have Christie Trenholme, Deputy Corporation Counsel. Let me turn off my volume, here. Okay. Committee Staff, we have Sam Tanck, Legislative Analyst; Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst; Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney; Pauline Martins, Committee Secretary; and Jean Pokipala, Assistant Clerk. Today on our agenda, we still have three items: ADEPT-1(14), Update of Climate Action Resiliency Planning and Committee [*sic*]...and Climate Change, Resiliency, and Sustainability Contracts; ADEPT-1(4), Operational and Budgetary Review of Watershed Protection Grants Administered by the Department of Water Supply; ADEPT-1(3), Operational and Budgetary Review of Environmental Protection Grants Administered by the Office of the Mayor. These items are informational only, Members, and no legislative action will be taken today. Thank you, Members and Administration, for being here. Let's continue where we left off.

ADEPT-1(14): UPDATE OF CLIMATE ACTION AND RESILIENCY PLAN AND CLIMATE CHANGE, RESILIENCY, AND SUSTAINABILITY CONTRACTS

CHAIR JOHNSON: Today, we came...we left off from ADEPT-1(14), Update of Climate Action Resiliency Plans and Climate Change, Resiliency, and Sustainable Contracts. In accordance with Rule 7(B) of the Rules of the Council, the Committee intends to continue to discuss matters related to the update of Climate Action and Resiliency Plan

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and Climate Change Resiliency and Sustainable Contracts. No legislative action will be taken. Members, as we've seen in this era of climate change has resulted in natural disasters that occur with more frequency and intensity than ever before. If we want to reduce harm to our people and our 'aina, it is crucial that we adopt a comprehensive climate action and resiliency plan that outlines realistic goals and timelines that can be easily implemented throughout our County. In June 2021, the County executed Contract C7436 with Lotus Engineering and Sustainability LLC for the creation of the County of Maui Joint Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, which was overseen by the former Climate Change Resiliency and Sustainability Office. In 2022, the Council received a draft plan entitled 2022 Status Report, but as a County, we have yet to adopt any official climate change...climate action and resiliency plan. All Pacific Island communities are experiencing the impacts of climate change, and things are only growing worse. The impacts of climate change include rising sea levels, compromising critical infrastructure and displacing Maui residents living near the ocean, adding to our already overwhelming housing crisis. Our supply chain is at risk, since our ports are just above sea-level. Think of the erosion we already have seen in South and West Maui. Just last year, \$23 million of Federal funding was earmarked to strengthen Honoapi'ilani Highway against coastal erosion. Weather patterns are changing. We are seeing strong hurricanes and longer, more frequent, severe droughts. This harm...this harms our water and food supply and places us at greater risk for natural disasters. We have seen the water restriction notices and many of us have made the connection between the changing climate and the dry conditions which led to the catastrophic 2023 fires; record-breaking temperatures, which are a danger to human health, especially our keiki, kūpuna, and unsheltered. Hotter weather also increases transmission of diseases that harm our rich island's biodiversity. Many of our endemic birds are headed towards extinction because of warming mauka areas that were once pest free but are now inundated with invasive species, including mosquitoes that breed and spread diseases. Changes to our ocean temperature and chemistry increase the frequency of coral bleaching which negatively impact fish supply and is killing the ocean ecosystem. Record ocean heat in 2014 and 2019 led to documented bleaching events and any old-timer will attest to the declines they've seen in our reefs over the years. All of these impacts and more are what is at stake when we talk about climate action. A climate action and resiliency plan is paramount. It's not just the environment. Billions of dollars in economic loss, harm to our ocean food stock, social disruption due to climate migration and natural disasters, depletion of cultural and natural resources, declines in our tourism and agriculture industries, extinction of species found nowhere else in the world, and a loss of life in devastating tragedies. Do we really need to go...go on? The consensus of 99.9 percent of peer-reviewed scientific papers is that climate change is mainly caused by humans. It is not just a condemnation of our business as usual; it is an opportunity to recognize that our actions and our decisions today together as an entire human species are the biggest variables and which will determine whether the worst consequences of our climate change are mitigated, or whether we place this burden upon our children. A County Climate Action and Resiliency Plan is our opportunity to commit to doing the best we can and all we can to create a resilient island. Before us today is the Maui County Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, or the CARP, 2022 Status Report. It was not adopted in 2022 and now, more than a year later,

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we are waiting for an amended version. Resource personnel, Darla Palmer-Ellingson and Alex de Roode, who worked on formulating the CARP 2022 Status Report and Tuki Drake, representing the Office of Innovation, as well as Director Mahi, are all here to answer any questions. Just a reminder that we have closed testimony for ADEPT-1(14), so no further testimony will be taken on this item. Members, I'd like to continue our discussion and entertain any further questions you might have regarding the CARP and Climate Change Resiliency Plan and Sustainable Contracts. I propose a continued three minutes per Councilmember for each round of the discussion and before I open onto the rounds of discussion, I saw Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez's hand up. Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo for your opening remarks and...and for the proposed process for today. I completely support it. I was wondering if the folks we asked to serve as Resource Personnel, such as Ms. Darla are here, as well Mr. de Roode.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Ms. Palmer-Ellingson is first and is, Mr. de Roode, he...is he on the call? He should be on the call. Okay, he's on the call and as well as Mr. Drake. Is he on the call as well? Okay. They're all here. And Director Mahi is...is also here as well. Yep. Everyone's here virtually and some in person. So, does that answer your question, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez? I see you froze up there. Uh-oh. Did we lose her? Okay. Okay. We're going to go down. I hope that answered your question, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. We'll go down the list of Councilmembers for our discussion. So, moving forward, we have Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci. Three minutes for you, Councilmember.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. I was going to defer to Member Rawlins-Fernandez, but it looks like she said that she lost connection. So, I can...I can refer to my...my colleagues, Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's move on. We'll just go down the row here. Councilmember Cook, do you have any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Actually, since I missed the last meeting, Chair, I was going to defer.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: For now.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Maybe...if you guys come up with anything in second round, we can certainly come back to you.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Let's see if Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez is back on the call. Councilmember? Okay. Well, while we wait for her, how about --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I'm here.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh. There she is. Okay. Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, sorry about that. That's the way the internet works sometimes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Sure is. That's the risk of participating remotely. Okay. Let's see. My first question, I think, is for...I think I asked...is Mr. Cooper here?

CHAIR JOHNSON: No, Mr. Cooper will not be joining us today, but we have Tuki Drake.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mr. Drake.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, Mr. Drake.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. Well, if he's representing the Office of Innovations, then my question will be for him. So, we heard in the last meeting that you folks, the office went out for feedback last July and is planning to go back out for public participation in April or May. My...my question, I guess, for the Office of Innovations is what the problem in adopting the plan as-is, or making whatever amendments the...the Councilmembers and testifiers provide feedback on? And then, as you folks continue to engage the public, if there's amendments to be made, then those amendments can be proposed during that time, instead of holding up this...this entire plan that the community spent a long time...community members spent a long time working on. And as, you know, Chair Johnson said in his opening remarks, like, we're...we're the last ones. We're the last County to adopt a Climate Action Plan.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. Drake, are you able to respond and unmute yourself? I know Teams can be tricky. Are you here, Mr. Drake?

MR. DRAKE: Yes, can you hear me?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yep. Loud and clear. Great.

MR. DRAKE: Okay. Chair, thank you. And thank you, Councilmember, for the question. I'm not the subject expert, as our Environmental Coordinator is at a sustainability conference, but I'm here to answer this question to the best of my ability. And I can tell you right now, 100 percent, that we do need a Climate Action Resilience Plan, 100 percent. We are needing it as one of the last counties to adopt one. I think the intention behind this, and I don't want to take up more of your time on this, but one of my intentions with OIS is that whatever we do produce is going to be accepted by the wider community, so I understand from our Environmental Coordinator, they wanted a wider breadth of the community. We're not intending to hold it up, so I think FY'25 was the goal to full adoption. And again, as Council, you're...you're the ones that are going to

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be adopting this, so absolutely to engage with each Councilmember. I know that Joshua Cooper, as well as Kaiea Medeiros and myself have reached out to different Councilmembers for their opinion regarding the CARP and we've also spoken with everyone from CARPAC. So, I don't want to take up more of your time, but if you have any further follow-up questions, our intention is to absolutely push this towards full adoption. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Drake. The time bell has rung, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, if we have...if you have more, we can go back second round for you. Plenty of time. Okay. Council Chair Alice Lee, any questions for our folks?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yes, I do have a question. It could be for you. Is this item something that you initiated or did the Department, the Office of Innovations initiate to come before the Council to pass?

CHAIR JOHNSON: I brought it up here because it's not ready to be passed, right? This is just 7(B). So, we wanted to find out what the path forwards [sic] are. Should we take this as a Committee and, you know, get in...get into it, or...or should we --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- I kind of want to hear what the Department has to say before we get into that. But there might be options on the table. Right now, it's just a 7(B).

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. I realize that no legislative action was expected. But I just wondered who initiated this item in the Committee because, you know, the previous speaker just said that they intend to promote this and have the Council pass this eventually, but...but it was you who brought it up. So, apparently, they're not ready, right?

CHAIR JOHNSON: And plus, we have budget coming forward. So, it would have been nice to kind of find out what...was there any budget requests from here that we would have to implement immediately. You know, so let's have it a little bit --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That would have been my next question because normally that's what people come to us for, too, is ...for implementation, we need to know exactly what is being proposed, and the cost, and so forth. But apparently, it's just a general update at this point, right?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right. We wanted to update it before the budget, just like what you're talking about. So --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Um-hum.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That's all I have.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Okay, let's see here. Do we have any second rounds? Okay, we do have one from Councilmember Cook. Okay. Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I had a question for Ms. Mahi regarding the...the environmental...FY'23 Environmental Protection grants line items and the one specifically regarding within environmental protection up to \$600,000 must be used for watershed management, planning, implementation by Maui Environmental Consulting, MEC, or Central Maui Soil and Water Conservation District, two proposals. And that consisted of a \$550,000 line item and a 490...\$49,950 line item. And I was wondering about the status of that. I believe this...there was some confusion the last time we heard this.

MS. MAHI: Yes, hi. Can you hear me?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes.

MS. MAHI: I am unmuted and my camera's on but I don't see it, but that's okay. So, from what I understand from the OIS staff who, by the way, just joined my office last month, so, I'm being caught up on everything that they had going on. And I did ask Maria Ornellas to be here today to answer these. I don't know if she is because she is in a different office than I am. But, from what understood was, in the grant it didn't specify...or in the line item it didn't specify a certain area that this study was going to be done. So, in the last meeting we were at, Michael Reyes, I believe, commented that he had an application for a different location versus the one just before the study that he just completed that we got the final report of, I believe, in December. So, the Fiscal Year '24 grant has not been executed yet.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, the tickler was redundant? I'm not quite sure I understand what the answer is during...during the review. Was it determined that this was work that was already completed and unnecessary?

MS. MAHI: Right. That's what I was told, that he would be doing the same plan again. But he clarified in the last meeting that it was for a different area, to do the same study in a different area.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, what is the status of this, and to who? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

MS. MAHI: Oh, I would have to defer to Maria. So, I can get back to you on that.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Chair?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, if we could just get that for the...to the Committee.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure, we can get that in writing. Staff, did you hear the question we can send on --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- to the Department? Okay. I know we jumped, but if you...if you allow me, I have a question, Vice-Chair Sinenci. All right. So, this next question is for...let's see if Mr. Drake is on the call. I can ask him, but if anybody else wants to pop up. But basically, what is the plan and timeline for creating the CARP that will be submitted to the Council review...review? Do you guys need more time to send it on to the Council?

MR. DRAKE: Sorry. Can you hear me?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yep. Loud and clear.

MR. DRAKE: Okay. Thank you. Thanks for the question, Chair. So, right now we're wrapping up all the contracts we specifically have with American Microgrid Solutions and Stantec. There's a number of unpaid invoices from 2022 in the last Administration that we're wrapping up and making sure that the scope of work matches the invoices. So, that has been done with American Microgrid Solutions. There is also, regarding the overall status for the Stantec work that has been completed, we're at 90 percent for the overall status on certain elements, but there are elements such as resilient housing that needed a little bit more work and the fire and heat map that need a little bit more work as well.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MR. DRAKE: So, we are currently working with their--the...the person that...that is assigned to the task over here in Maui County. We're working with her to make sure that we finish and finalize everything, which should be done by FY'23, or sorry...FY'24, fourth quarter. So, before the next financial year...so...fiscal year. So, I think that --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DRAKE: -- we're working on that to get that done. Thank you so much.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. So, I'm...this question is for Director Mahi or Mr. Drake; I'm not sure, but in the...in the...one of the slide shows that Mr. Cooper had was the implementation about all these funds. The REPI we had 1.5 million; a Community Food Forest had 200 grand; EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction, 7 million; Resiliency Hub, 700,000; NOAA Climate-Ready Workforce, 1.5 million; Hazard Mitigation Grants, it says in progress. So, can you give us an update or status on all these big, large funds, either Director Mahi or Mr. Drake?

MS. MAHI: Yeah. I can...I can...I can give you an update on some of those. So, the REPI grant we were awarded 1.5 million from the Department of Defense.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Great.

MS. MAHI: We're using that for reforestation. It's always in the Moku 'O Kula, so from Haleakalā past the Hi-Tech Park where Space Force and Air Force is located down into the wetlands and then also working on the wetlands, working with some of our project partners on that. Community Food Forest, it's actually a Tuki program, so I'll let him talk to you about that. \$7 million, we partnered with the State. We did find out that we're not getting 7 million, but we are getting 6 million instead.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh. Good to know.

MS. MAHI: The Resilience Hubs is the monies that our Office is giving out to organizations to stand up resiliency hubs focusing on Lāhainā, Molokaʻi, and Hāna, first and foremost. And we're hoping that the...they can get started on that within the next couple of months. Climate-Ready Workforce, again that was another Federal grant that we received. And same thing, we're working on reforestation, taking care of our wetlands and we were awarded 1.5 million. Hazard Mitigation Grant, again, that was something that Tuki was working on, so I'll let him answer for those two items.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Why don't we...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: I'll wait for my second round, Mr. Drake. But let me...my time's up, so I'll come back to that, okay? And I --

MR. DRAKE: No problem.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you. Councilmember...or Committee Vice-Chair Sinenci.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. Just a follow up to your questions to Ms. Mahi. Did the Department of Defense also include mitigation for deer...for a deer processing plant, or is that another --

MS. MAHI: Oh.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director Mahi?

MS. MAHI: Yeah. So, when...yes. So, thank you. So, originally, when we submitted our application, we did ask for more money so that we could include deer mitigation. We ended up getting a million dollars less than we asked for. So, because of that, the reason why we took out the deer mitigation part was we already are funding and have other organizations like DLNR that's already working on it. Besides...with County funding and State funding, we're already working on that. So, we wanted to work on the prevention of more flooding in South Maui.

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VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay, thank you.

MS. MAHI: Again, taking into...yeah. So, just taking into consideration that we're working in alignment with where the Air Force and Space Force is on Haleakalā, to the Tech Park and down into that corridor.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that clarification. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. So, we all had the chance to do one round. Second round, Members, any hands for second round? Okay. I'll...I'll ask a quick question. I don't see any hands. Mr. Drake, can you follow up on some of the questions I had in regards to the funds, the NOAA Climate-Ready Workforce 1.5 million and the Hazard Mitigation Grants that's in progress? And the Resilience Hubs, according to Director, is on...is not on Lānaʻi. So, maybe you can speak to those?

MR. DRAKE: Yes, thank you Chair. Happy to speak to . . .*(inaudible)*. . . those items. Oh.

MS. MAHI: Sorry.

MR. DRAKE: So, Community Food Forest initiative is a \$200,000 initiative that essentially...there's a multi-pronged approach to helping our community, specifically those that are low-income demographic and those that were affected by the wildfires, specifically the youth. So, the idea is to create a community food forest within actually a County parcel, it's a two-acre parcel. The design has already been done for multiple years and now we're in this phase of actually implementation to construct it. And the idea is that there's healing through planting. So, that's one of the initiatives. It's going to be centrally located in Kahului and it's, I think, the wide-ranging impact for the community. Secondly, I believe you had a question with regards to Resilience Hubs. Specifically, Chair, what was the question, if you don't mind?

CHAIR JOHNSON: The list of Resiliency Hubs did not include Lānaʻi. Do you...does the Department have any intention to include Lānaʻi for a Resilient Hub?

MR. DRAKE: So...and I can speak to this. Absolutely. The Resilience Hubs actually is 12 Resilience Hubs we hope to roll out. So, the first three that we've chosen, Hana, Lāhainā, and Molokaʻi, is because we have community partners that have showed deep interest in already starting it. So the work has already kind of been rolling out. So, we're there to support. We're not there to tell them how to do it. We're there to support financially and with any kind of expertise we can provide.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you for that response. Okay, Members. Questions for second round? Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. This question is for Office of Innovations again. So in the last meeting, there...there was some comments made about

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this not being a plan. You know, community plans have action items. We all know that action items are only as good as the people who are heading the lead agency that are assigned or cited to spearhead the following...the follow-through on these items. So, just like community plans, the CARP action items have a specific, you know, call to action, or proposal, or recommendation, a time frame, an estimated cost, high, low...high, medium, low, and a lead agency. What additional details would you folks, you know, expect to add to make it more qualify as a plan, since the comments were it's not a plan as it's written?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director or Mr. Drake?

MS. MAHI: I can just answer in regards to what I've seen in the idea of the estimated costs, where some of them have \$1 sign, \$2 signs, kind of like a YELP review where something is a certain cost. We still have to determine what that \$1 sign means versus a \$2 sign mean, right; so that we can put forward, you know, what...and then of course once this...when this was created, are those costs still the same now?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo, Director Mahi. So, I...I believe what was explained by Ms. Palmer-Ellingson and Mr. de Roode was that it was low, medium, high...\$1 sign, \$2 signs, or \$3 signs because, as you said, that as time changes, the cost could change. But, I'll...I'll ask maybe Ms. Palmer-Ellingson, or Ellingson-Palmer, Palmer-Ellingson.

MS. MAHI: Yeah, it just kind of would be good to know what that low amount is. Like, is there, you know a --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh. Okay.

MS. MAHI: -- range, like low, medium, and high.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Let's ask.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Ms. Palmer-Ellingson, you have a response to that?

MS. PALMER-ELLINGSON: So, and I'm going to ask Alex to jump in too, but my understanding is, you know, this is a complete plan with very comprehensive action items. Those...those symbols are a way to prioritize as far as how much a project costs; is it high, medium, or low? But each of those action items are in itself a...a project. It...it...it would take . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . comprehensive planning and its own budget to carry out. So, there is...this plan is very typical of what you would see in many other communities of a...of a climate action plan. And then, from those action items, it's a roadmap forward. It...it shows you the priorities, and as you take on the priorities, you...you flesh out the project. And I'll let Alex chime in on the dollars.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. de Roode?

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MR. DE ROODE: Thank you, Chair. Yeah. I echo what...what Darla just shared. The intent would be dollar signs was to show relative costs, so what would be, you know, relative to all the actions that are in the plan, what are lower versus mid versus high? And in order to really quantify that, you...you do need...depending on the type of action...some might need the engineering and design analysis, in order to get to that point. We might need to put it out to bid to get to that point. And with 100-plus actions, you can't get exact dollar amounts, you know, to guide that. You need to prioritize what your actions are and then start to drill down once the plan is adopted in...in what's the highest priority and then what you have the bandwidth to do, or what the community partners can bring to the table, what the State and Federal government can bring to the table. So, it's really not just that the County has to implement, right? This is a plan for the community. The County's just spearheading the process of having the plan developed and then the County plays some role in the implementation of certain actions, for sure, and helping to track progress and report out moving forward.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. All right. The time's up, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. And I figure, before we defer this item, Members I'd like to maybe have Mr. de Roode and Ms. Palmer-Ellingson to kind of...speak...have...kind of like a...not necessarily...just speak on what we were talking about earlier today and if there's anything you'd want to add to it. So, Mr. de Roode, would you want to start?

MR. DE ROODE: Yes, Chair. Thank you. I'm happy to. Just wanted to point out that, with regards to the community input, and...and certainly, you know, the more community input the better. At some point you have to say, we received what we received; let's at least put out a plan based on that. And then the intent, again, was for yearly updates on tracking progress and saying, here's where we're at, and at least every five years to have a, you know, thorough update of the plan that would reflect any developments or changes in circumstances, et cetera. In terms of how much outreach was conducted, I would refer readers to the...let me just it pull up here...I had it on my many screens that are up at the same time. But we have a section called community outreach and it basically quantifies how many individuals were engaged with, how many meetings were held, workshops were held, surveys...we had five surveys with over 800 responses. So, there's very thorough and...and broad input that was collected as part of this process. Also, at the end of the document, the...the very last pages, you'll see a list of...in the acknowledgement sections...of all the different stakeholders and...and individuals who provided input into this process. So, I...I...you know, we really did everything we could to get as broad of input as possible and let people participate in whatever ways they could or felt comfortable with, right? And the intent when we transmitted this to Council back in November, if you look at the transmittal, it's asking County Council to review the document and provide any input, any feedback, back to the Mayor's Administration, as well as during that time while Council would be providing that...that input, we would continue to take in public...additional public input and input from the CARPAC and then bring all that together into a final version that would move to Council for adoption by ordinance. That was the intent. The hope was that that would be done in about March or April of 2023, was kind of the timeline we were projecting there. So that was the intent at the time. We did also...there's a communication from

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December 30th, 2022, to the CARE Committee, to Councilmember King, where we responded to some questions she had about the plan. And I'd refer Councilmembers back to that communication, as well. There's some additional information there on...on the kind of feedback and...and discussion on the process. We're...I'm happy to, you know, serve as a resource moving forward as well and, you know, wish the Office of Innovation all the best in moving forward with it and hopefully we can, you know, take advantage and...and really use that great resource, all that...of all that input we received over about a year and a half long period.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for that. Mr. de Roode, I'm going to ask a more specific question after that where you mentioned a dollar sign, \$2 signs, the \$3 signs. Do you have, like, a range of what is \$1 sign? Is there a range of it, or is it just not...it's just small, medium, and large?

MR. DRAKE: Yeah, the...so, there really is...it's just relative to each other. So, there's no, like, \$1 sign is, you know, caps out at 500,000 --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

MR. DRAKE: -- and \$2 signs is a million.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. That's what I was wondering, if it was --

MR. DRAKE: Yeah. Some of them may be low cost or no cost, right?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DRAKE: It may be just that we need to adopt a policy...develop and adopt a policy and those are typically, even though they take staff time and et cetera, they are a lower cost than building resilience hubs, for example.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Palmer-Ellingson, do you have anything you would like to add after what the discussion was just had?

MS. PALMER-ELLINGSON: Yes, thank you, Chair. So, we heard in the last meeting and the meeting in May, the activities, reestablishing a CARP steering committee, public outreach, and more recently establishing a...a new basic website, a template-based website. And it's a little concerning that these activities are repetitive and less comprehensive than what was done in the original two-year planning process. Take the website, for example. The website that was built, Resilient Maui Nui, is extremely comprehensive, capable of, you know, extensive overlay mapping, and I don't think it should be abandoned. There are contracts not completed and allowed to lapse. I know that's one of the things that was on the agenda for this...for this item, so I...I just wanted to actually ask. I think it was Mr. Drake that commented that OIS is wrapping a contract with Stantec, so who's taking over that work? Or if maybe we can get an update on the status because, according to the project lead for Stantec, there's...there's no activity at

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all and there's no contract. And so also, on Ms. Mahi's comment on mitigation that the line item, I don't know if that includes mitigation for the fire disaster zones or, you know, any involvement in resiliency for the recent fires. I...I...I know there's other departments working on that, but this is an opportunity where a climate office would have that crossover interaction in resiliency and sustainability, so if a tragedy like that happened again, we don't have the...the loss of life hopefully and the tragedy that...that transpired.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. PALMER-ELLINGSON: Because it's not a question of if, it's a question of when. Also, I haven't heard anything about our...our two biggest carbon concerns, which is transportation and the built-environment. So, you know, that should be a primary focus of...of any climate plan. And previously, the Councilmembers had asked about accountability. How...how do we know that this plan is being worked on or moving along and I think that part of that is...and...and also for continuity, putting that under a department, possibly the Department of Management. Then you have a greater accountability to, you know, be involved actually, --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. PALMER-ELLINGSON: -- you know, in...in this plan. Like Alex mentioned, this is...this is a living plan. Things like the disaster come up. You know, we couldn't have predicted that in creating the plan. And when it comes up, you...you have the...the structure in place and the policy and...and...to be able to jump in and really be effective in...in that disaster. So, I...I really appreciate again; thank you OIS and...and Chair for...for bringing this forward. It's really important. And I just wanted to encourage you not to throw out the comprehensive plan that was already made, but use that...that research and that data and those action items as a really good jumping off point. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. So, the Chair's intention is to defer this, but I wanted to kind of hear from Director Mahi and then...or from Mr. Drake to add to the conversation, but I did see a hand up from Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. I just had a question for Department of Water Supply before the meeting ended.

CHAIR JOHNSON: We're...we're not on that agenda item. We'll get to that when they...they'll be here for that one. So, we'll...we'll be there in a moment. So, Director Mahi, if you'd like to comment on anything and then when we go to Mr. Drake...Mr. Drake, any comments as well. But maybe you can reach out to that concern about the internet presence. What's happening with the...with the website? So, Director Mahi?

MS. MAHI: Yeah. I guess for me, like I said, I'm just learning all of this since it was brought into my office last month. But I know when I've met with Josh and Tuki and Kaiea, since January was always a why wasn't it adopted back in December '22. And I know the comments that, I believe, even Councilmember Rawlins mentioned, it, you know,

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could have been part of politics; but was there a component of it that the CARPAC didn't like about it? Was there a component of it that County Council didn't like about it? Because I don't know. So, trying to...and I know that Josh and Tuki sent out emails to everyone. They've met with a bunch of different CARPAC members to...to get their feedback just to find out and I even heard from some earlier before this meeting that there was components of...and they were members of CARPAC that was not on board. So, you know, like that's what my concern is because obviously it wasn't adopted for a reason.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay, Director Mahi. I know you just got it in your Department. This, Members, has been...we...we should really be reading this and we should really be on the...aware of this CARP plan. So, I know you just got it but...or, Director Mahi, but we have had it for a while. Let's see...let's hear from...I see Mr. de Roode, your hand is up?

MR. DE ROODE: Yes, I wanted to just respond to Director Mahi's questions regarding why it wasn't adopted back in '22 and the reason being is that the input process was not completed at that point. So, the...there were...there were certain members of the CARPAC that wanted to have additional time to continue their review and provide additional input. We communicated to them that we would transmit to Council the draft where it...where it was currently and that the CARPAC could continue to provide input, and that would be incorporated along with Council's input before a final version was transmitted for adoption. So, that's why...we just ran out of time. We...we tried to do as thorough of a public engagement process as possible, get the plan as far along as we could with the contractors we had on board, and we ran out of time at the end. But we were close. It was...the CARPAC needed a little more time. I mean, we met with the CARPAC I think at least nine times and...and had opportunities for them to provide input between meetings and...and so we did get significant input, but wanted to get that additional time to provide any final, you know, input that was needed.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Drake, would you like to have anything to add to the conversation?

MR. DRAKE: Thank you, Chair. Yeah. Absolutely. I think there was a couple questions. So, regarding the internet presence; we have already hired a contract to actually bolster the website to make it...and there's obviously different elements that we want to incorporate as well, so more cell phone access. And again, I know that during the time that this CARP plan was in development...and I think that it's a beautiful plan...I think there's a lot of scaffolding we can build on. And so, I think that's the most important part is that we're not against CARP. I don't think OIS has ever been against CARP and I know that our Environmental Coordinator has ever thought of it as anything but a great plan to build off of. So, I think I want to make sure that's really clear. You know, as far as the internet presence; we're working on that right now. We have a contractor that's working on that and to show all of the activities that we've been engaging in in the last year to make it easily accessible to the public. Second of all, I believe that there was a question regarding Stantec and that the contract expired. Yes, the contract did expire. And absolutely the idea was that we were also going to do a no-cost extension

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on that contract, but we were advised against that. That being said, we are in close coordination with Sherry Alu and so, there are unpaid invoices from 2022 but there are scopes of work that they want to make sure they complete as well, so we're in negotiation with them, as well. So...and it's mostly conversation because I think that every contractor that wanted to do this work, they wanted to make sure that this work was completed to satisfaction of not only them but for County of Maui. So, I think we are definitely on board with that and we definitely want to push this plan to completion. Thank you so much.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Drake. Okay. I plan to defer this and so if anybody else has any burning questions. Seeing none. Okay. Oh, we got one from Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. So, in your...your earlier comments, I think it was to Chair Lee, you said that you wanted to have a discussion on how we, as a Council, move forward. How long are you thinking that we wait for the Office of Innovations because, you know, as Mr. Cooper said last meeting that they went out for community feedback in last July and then, you know, they have plans to go out for community engagement again I think March and April was what their presentation said, I believe. And if, you know, and then I...I just heard Mr. Tuki say that they're in the process of...of contracting someone again to update the plan. So, you know, this...this plan was never meant to be like set in stone. It was always meant to be adaptive and always changing as we need it to change, so like, do...do we give them until, you know, like after budget? And like, if action isn't taken, then we're going to take action on it or, like, do you have any ideas? That would be what I would like. If...if action is not taken on this by the end of budget, then we...we just move on it.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. I hear you loud and clear, Councilmember. I wanted to kind of see where we were at before budget because I won't be able to do it, you know, we're all going to be so busy during budget. But maybe after budget, that might be a slot. And I kind of wanted to see where...what...what lifting we would be required to do. Where have...how far have they gone, how far has the Administration gone in this and after hearing this, we...we...you know, we might have to take it up, but I want to kind of...I...I can't really decide that right now but...because I'm thinking we want to give Administration a chance to...to...but we also don't want the can to be kicked down in, you know, and that kind of scenario. It's definitely...we have to do something soon. You know, the...the...the fires and all of the things that are happening, we have to be able to...to address these concerns quickly and immediately. And I always want to remind everybody, this...having a good CARP plan allows you to reach out for those Federal funds that we all, you know, say that this...this heavy lifting is needed. So, the...the more we...we wait, the flow of money just keeps going to other communities that have their act together and once again, we are the only County that don't have one. So, we should kind of have...act with some sense of urgency. So, I'm thinking, let's...let's see what we can do after budget.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. . . .(timer sounds). . .

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, if there's no objections, I will now defer this item. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay, Members. Thank you for that. And thank everybody for joining us, all of the resources and all of the Department. Really appreciate your...your folks' input.

**ADEPT-1(4): OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF WATERSHED
PROTECTION GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY DEPARTMENT OF WATER
SUPPLY**

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. The next item...it's 2:30, so we can go on a little bit farther. We don't need a break right yet. Operational and Budgetary Review of Watershed Protection Grants Administered by Department of Water Supply. In accordance with Rule 7(B) of the Rules of the Council, the Committee will receive a presentation and discuss matters relating to the operational and budgetary review of watershed protection grants administered by the Department of Water Supply. No legislative action will be taken today. Members, in FY 2024, the County set aside more than \$3 million in the Department of Water Supply budget for watershed grants. These grants are intended to support community groups that manage the important watersheds of our County to ensure that we have functioning, recharging fresh...freshwater resources. Watersheds and freshwater stewardship is especially important during the era of climate change. Let's start with the presentations from the Department of Water Supply. So, I'm...I'm assuming Ms. Blumenstein and Mr....Mr. De Robles is here...and, yep, thank you for joining us. Is, was the Director on...I didn't...Stufflebean, was he on the call or are you going to take the lead?

MR. STUFFLEBEAN: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh. Okay. Director Stufflebean's here.

MR. STUFFLEBEAN: . . .(audio interference). . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Wonderful.

MR. STUFFLEBEAN: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you.

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MR. STUFFLEBEAN: Oh, I'm here, but I'm going to just – sorry. Yeah, I'm here, but I'm just turning it over to Eva for the presentation. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great. Great. So, okay, the floor's yours, Department.

MR. DE ROBLES: Good afternoon, Councilmembers, Committee Chair. Thank you for having me here. Robert De Robles, Planner with the Water Department, and I'm also the Advance Manager for Watershed Protection Grants Program. Let me first start off by giving you an outline of what we're going to be presenting today. So, first the need for the DWS Watershed Protection Grants Program, then current DWS grantees and funding amounts, Fiscal Year 2024 grantee progress and drawdowns. The DWS successes, opportunities, and challenges and then the DWS Watershed Grants program opportunities for FY'25. That's okay. So, why do we need...the need for the Watershed Program; why do we need it? Well, forested watersheds face major invasive threats that alters its ability to provide efficient ecosystem services that help maintain reliable groundwater recharge and stream flow that provides Maui's drinking water supplies. Also, feral ungulates, like hogs, deer, cows, and goats, damage forests by wallowing, uprooting, and trampling vegetation which destabilizes the vegetation against erosion. Non-native weed species can also overtake efficient native forest overstory and deprive sunlight from understory native plants that are adapted to capturing rain and fog drip to re-nourish soil in the upper watersheds. Watershed partnerships provide on-the-ground management of protective fencing and control feral ungulates from overwhelming critical watersheds...upper watersheds. So, coming in Fiscal Year 2025 are proposals to actively reduce fire risks by clearing and monitoring the wildland urban interface (or WUI) where watersheds border populated areas. ...Next. Yeah, change. Oh, sorry. Okay. So, what you see here are Watershed Protection Program grantees and awarded amounts. As you can see, we have ten grantees right now. The applicants proposed 3.148 million and then we awarded 3,048,119. We have East Maui Watershed Partnership, Waikamoi Water Source Protection, Auwahi Forest Restoration Project, Mauna Kahalawai Watershed Partnership, Honokowai and Wahikuli Source Protection, Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve, East Moloka'i Watershed Partnership, Maui Invasive Species Committee, Hawai'i Agricultural Research Center handling Koa, and Hawai'i Agriculture Research Center handling 'ōhi'a, rapid 'ōhi'a death. Next slide we're going to be talking about some of the drawdowns. So, for FY'24, in order to alleviate overlapping and funding between previous and current fiscal years, all grantees starting this year, FY'24, were provided Notice to Proceed letters (or NTPs) with a projected performance period starting January 1st to December 31st. This was a way so we could prevent overlapping of funds and that everybody could start at the same time and end at the same time. Grantees are reconciling closing out FY'23s as we speak. So, we actually ended FY'23 early in order to accommodate FY'24 grants to start by January. So, FY'24 grantees are also in the second month of the performance period. So, we're actually approaching a third month of FY...third month in the first quarter of FY'24, and we'll be submitting the first quarter reports on April 2024. Many grantees face the same staff turnover issues that began before and worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to what the County's facing now with short...with short staff. The DWS grantees are working together to learn and improve the use of AmpliFund grants management

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platforms for improved transparency and accounting. So, we're working on...we have been working on in the last couple years on AmpliFund which is a grants management software system that helps us streamline and makes the grants processing more efficient, both for us and for our grantees. Okay, so next slide here we have some of our successes so far. Again, we just started FY'24, so we haven't gotten the first quarter report yet but, based on, you know results so far for FY'23, these are the numbers of acres we're currently managing, miles of ungulate fence construction, 138 miles plus and over 110,000 invasive weeds removed. And so far since 1997, \$29 million so far that we've funded. So, some of the successes, protecting priority watershed areas through Maui County, strong public outreach and volunteerism. Our grantees really have a strong component to make sure that they spread information and news about what's happening in our watersheds and how they could help. Funding investments are tied to operational budgets to ensure reliable funding for projects now and into the future. So, we allocate about four percent of our operational budget every year and we consider things like inflation that we'll need to fund our grants. Thorough monitoring of expenditures to be fiscally responsible...so we actually are very fiscally responsible when it comes to expenditures and we focus a lot of our time and energy to make sure that money is spent responsibly through...in our program. But there are some challenges. I'll name a few. Field staff turnover. So, as you know, there's a lot of...well, this kind of position or working in the watersheds is...is a difficult job. Being on the ground, making sure you're hiking and doing a lot of dangerous work out there. And really, it's...it's a demanding job, including some of the things we ask for because of our requirements. You have to be a smart technical and to have certifications a lot of times for these positions. And it takes the...it takes time to hire the right people. And then required time to hire qualified technical staff, is why I just mentioned it. Rappelling out of helicopters, working on sheer cliffs; it's very dangerous work. So, it's not something that we can just throw money at and then we hire people right away. But we try, we try to be as flexible as possible. Monitoring and propagation of new and existing biological control of invasive plants. So, if you've kept up with watershed protection, you know, some invasive plants and weeds are very difficult to eradicate, so we try to control it, and we're evolving into the realm of trying these biological control to help bolster physical manpower on the field. Growing populations of ungulates below project fence lines. I'm sure there's other programs, OED, and other organizations have been trying to get rid of the...the huge population of...of feral ungulates roaming around, but it's putting pressure on the fence line in some of the projects we're...we're funding and sometimes they get through. And then we try to eliminate them from the more critical upper watersheds. And then, the inclusion of sustainable WUI component to existing grant deliverables, that's something that's new coming for FY'25. I know we're talking about '24, but we know we're always a year or two in advance when we...when we put out our RFP, or Request for Proposals. So, they're aware and we already...we already have our hands on FY'24 proposals that we wanted them to consider, Wildlife [sic] Urban Interface, potential fire hazards to mitigate, you know, any possible possibility of fire if they can around their project area. So, some opportunities...okay. Ongoing grant applications and administration, and possibly contracting, development of AmpliFund platform, which means we have been constantly developing our AmpliFund interface software, so we're working in getting feedback from our grantees and we're constantly

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in communication with Amplifund to see how this system could be best suited for our needs. It's not like a custom system, so there are a lot of things we all have to learn about it so it can be more efficient. Inclusion of quarterly before and after photographs of project...project areas where deliverables occur, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. So, every quarter, grantees apply reports to us and we try to go through it and...and match it with invoicing for request for payments. A lot of time...most of the time we really don't have the time or the staff to go out and do inspections in the field, so what we try to do is, for starting of FY'24 and '25 and beyond, is to have a more easy way to...for the grantees to submit before and after pictures of what they've been doing in the areas they've been doing it and aligning with Geographic Information System, or GIS. So, we'll be able to know exactly how they're doing with each deliverable that they're doing in the areas that they're working in. We're trying to guide grantees to learn more about the AmpliFund platform where all required budget and progress reports are submitted. Again, the AmpliFund software is meant so, if...if I wasn't here or another staff member wasn't there, that they still have a way to submit information and somebody could...could look at that and see what's going on with that grant and how it's...how it's doing. So, it's really important that we go out and we...we tell all our grantees to use that software. It not only alleviates some of the time for us because we don't want to be the one doing their accounting. We want to make sure that they're responsible for their own accounting and that they submit things correctly and we try to work with them. And that's...they're incorporating feedback from grantees regarding the AmpliFund platform. Again, we make sure we have a open-door communication between our grantees and we ask them how, you know, what their experiences are with the AmpliFund software and if there's anything we...they think that we can improve on and if we can, we...we...we try to do that. And we help grantees develop the Wildland Urban Interface scope of work proposals. So again, for '24...it's just not happening now, but for '25, which is coming in, you know, after December 31st, 2024, they've proposed some ways of trying to clear or help their border...project border areas to maybe clear, I don't know, shrubs and...and vegetation to make sure that there's a little buffer between their project and upper watershed and...and urban areas. So...but that's a little more complicated than it...than it seems because the...these projects is basically a component to what they're doing now. And it has to be laid out in such a way that we understand exactly if this...of what...exactly what they're doing, the staff that's required, because really, it's a...a different type of work than working up in upper watersheds, controlling feral ungulates and anything else. So, we want to be able to say if it doesn't work, we can remove it for now until proposals are more clear about what they...how they handle it because there's other organizations that does handle fire mitigation and control in the watersheds. So...but we're...we're trying to guide them in the right direction. And with that, that's...this presentation.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. And let me correct myself, if...is it De Robles?

MR. DE ROBLES: De Robles, correct. Yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Just making sure I get your name right, Mr. De Robles. Thank you for that presentation. Members, do we have any clarifying questions? Only clarifying.

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We'll get into our discussions as we move on. So, seeing none, I'd...let's see here. We're going to go onto any...any opening remarks from any other personnel during this time. So, Ms. Blumenstein, or even Director Stufflebean, do you have any other opening remarks?

MS. BLUMENSTEIN: Yes. Aloha. Thank you, Chair. And I'm sorry. I was...my microphone and camera was disabled, so I didn't ignore you earlier. I logged back in. So, what Robert De Robles covered, you know, the...the gist of it, I just want to mahalo that you allow the grantees to come and brief you on their projects. You know, we really depend heavily on...on the work they do. And Robert mentioned also we have sense of years tied...our grant subsidies to our operations budget to really make sure we have a, you know, a reliable, consistent source of funding. And, of course, if you approve rate increases, that budget goes up and we can increase, you know, grant subsidies. So, yeah. No, I'm just here as a resource if you have any questions. Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much. And how about Director Stufflebean. He said he was just here listening in, but do you have any opening remarks, Director?

MR. STUFFLEBEAN: Sure. I just wanted to echo what he was saying, that this might be maybe the most important thing we do in the long term.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MR. STUFFLEBEAN: You know, it's a...it's a, you know, allowing the watersheds to recover and protect them is a critical importance. So, I appreciate the support for...for this work. And the other thing is, it is hard work and...and finding people to do it is very challenging. So, I'll just leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, well said. Okay. Again, any clarifying questions for either Director Stufflebean or...or Ms. Blumenstein. Otherwise, we can get into the discussions, but before we get into the discussions, I'd like to open public testimony again for this item, ADEPT-1(4). So just give me a moment. If you previously testified on any of today's items at the February 8th meeting, please note that you'll be unable to testify on that item a second time at today's meeting. At this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use your raise your hand function and then unmute and...and identify yourself. Staff, do we have any testifiers?

. . .BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON ADEPT-1(4). . .

MS. MCKINLEY: No, Chair. There's no one indicating that they'd like to testify on this item right now.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. MCKINLEY: If you'd like, we can do a last call.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Last call. Let's see...do you have and last...any...anyone else wishing to testify? Any last call here? Last call. Okay, Members, seeing there's no more individuals wishing to testify, I will now proceed with the agenda. And without objection, I will now close public testimony on this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . .END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON ADEPT-1(4). . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's now enter into discussion on this item. Our Resource Personnel, Department Representatives are here to answer any further questions you might have regarding the operational budgetary review of watershed protection grants administered by the Department of Water Supply. I propose three minutes per Councilmember for each...each round of discussion and we'll just go down the list again. Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci. Councilmember.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, Mr. De Robles, Ms. Blumenstein, and Director Stufflebean. Mr. De Robles, you mentioned that you're trying to not overlap the annual grants so that they're not using present or future grants. What is to keep the departments, or the non-profits, from...from stopping any payroll if we're going to be doing that? Can we ensure that the workers will continue to get a paycheck versus waiting on some of these grants to come through and then the non-profits have to put some of their workers, you know, on leave until they get some of this funding.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. De Robles.

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you for that question, Chair. That's a good question. That's something we always...we always think about when it comes to these grants and...of course we never know...we're...we kind of...we have a committee every year that meets and how much we should provide for each grant. We review each grant every year. And we just have to wait until we know what's...what the Council has approved for these grants. But we do have discussions about how these funds are being used as efficiently as possible for personnel. We only fund a certain percentage of each personnel's salary. So, it's...it's not full time, with the exception of MISC because we...we're only...we only give them funds for personnel costs. But there's other projects that we fund personnel, supplies, materials, and so on and so forth, contractual, different expense categories. But we do...we do try to consider that and, with respect to FY'24 and cutting FY'25 early, there was...there was so much overlap that it just continues on. So, what happened was that we ended it December 31st and they still have three months to pretty much supply us with closing documents to make sure that they got their paperwork in line so we can make sure we...we pay them for all the existing outstanding invoices they may have, close out, three months while we start in January 31st, right, for FY'24. So, they ended December 31st. They have three months to supply FY closing documents for FY'23, but we were already starting FY'24 in January. So, they still...we're still paying them for FY'23 until they close it out, right? But they're already starting. So, before that it was eight months to almost a year of overlap in some cases. I mean, we're...one

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case, you know, East . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . West Maui, where Mauna Kahalawai couldn't spend down 87% of the funding in FY'23. That's how much overlap there was.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, wow.

MR. DE ROBLES: So...

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. That was my time.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Next, we'll move on to Councilmember Cook, followed by Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. Mr. Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. What...what mitigation measures do you have for South Maui, Kula, South Maui watershed. I mean, we don't have much of a watershed. We have a flood plain when it rains hard. How does that work for the areas that don't have much rainfall?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. De Robles.

MR. DE ROBLES: So, I mean, that's a good question. Talking about West...East Maui...right?

CHAIR JOHNSON: South Maui is what he's talking about.

MR. DE ROBLES: South Maui. I'm sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: The...the leeward side.

MR. DE ROBLES: So, we did have a grant, the Leeward Haleakalā. Unfortunately, we...they're not a grantee right now. We're waiting for an updated proposal on their side and an...and an upgraded management plan to handle leeward Haleakalā. But we haven't gotten an updated proposal yet. But I mean, East...East Maui Watershed Partnership, Dan Eisenberg, and...and Waikamoi TNC, they do a lot of work in the East, and MISC. So, we're all cognizant of, you know, any proposal that can come our way. We...we have been communicating with different organizations to try to put together something. But really, we have to wait for somebody to make a proposal and give us a realistic plan, because it has to be included in the management program with the landowners and the organization that has easement rights or access rights to the...to the land so it's...it's a complicated matter to try to align everybody to make sure there's a plan and...and that we can afford to...to...to...to fund.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Yeah. I was just curious because like, since it's not the watershed, it didn't seem like the Department of Water Supply would be doing much work...work in the...the areas.

MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah. Low, low watersheds. We...we...we're really focused on upper watersheds, 3,000 feet and above, critical watersheds.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah. Keep up the good work.

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for that, Councilmember Cook. Let's move on to Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo for the presentation. I'm looking at slide seven. There's...on the awarded amount column, there's \$100,000 at the bottom before the total that isn't assigned to an organization or at least it doesn't look like it is. At the bottom, number ten, Hawai'i Agricultural Research Center 'ōhi'a countywide funds, unless it's countywide funds. What...what is that 100,000 for, on slide seven?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. De Robles.

MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah. That's a good question. I mean, that's always been there. Initially, that was there for emergencies. Sometimes our grantees would require something that they didn't get funding for, maybe a vehicle or something that...that...that would break down or some...some contingency funding that we had in case, that we've used for. But it used to be one of HARC's...I got to double check again...but one of HARC's grants used to be on that countywide for a while until we create a line item for...for that particular program, if that makes any sense.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, where it says countywide funds, that's like a...

MR. DE ROBLES: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- so it should be like number 11, contingency funds, or something, under countywide?

MR. DE ROBLES: You could say that, yes. That...that would be a good way of putting it. We don't always use it, but we have used it in the past to make sure that we were able to help our grantees if they needed extra funding.

CHAIR JOHNSON: And I see Ms. --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. I see Ms. Blumenstein.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Ms. Blumenstein, would you like to add to this conversation?

MS. BLUMENSTEIN: Yes. Mahalo, Chair. Yeah, just following up on what Robert was saying. We have had a countywide fund, sort of a contingency. But in the past, a lot of that has been used for projects that were in the research stage, so they were not really...we didn't

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know if it was a sustainable long-term project. And that latest one that Robert mentioned, the Hawaii Agricultural Research Center, Rapid Ōhi'a Death, is one of those research projects that has sort of evolved more into a grant subsidy. But those funds for this Fiscal Year '24 still remains there to potentially tap into for grantees that may have an unforeseen, you know, new invasive weed, threat, or a storm. We had the 2017 storm that created some additional requests to deal with, fence repair and whatnot, so that's how that fund has served. Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. Did the timer go?

CHAIR JOHNSON: No, it has not. You still have some time.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, my next question is regarding the Wildland Urban Interface. Which grantees have managed...managed lands that have a wild...wildland urban interface?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. De Robles.

MR. DE ROBLES: So if you can just imagine ...*(timer sounds)*... these watersheds...any...any...thank you for the question. Any...any...any urban areas that may be near any of these projects on the West...like PKW, Pu'u Kukui, we could be talking about Mauna Kahalawai. All these...all these projects that are close to any urban development.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah. Which ones?

MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah. So, we actually got a proposal from Mauna Kahalawai. And that's the one that I believe we got right now for urban...wildland urban interface mitigation. But, you know, again I...I...I would have to look on a map to see where some of the housing may be around some of these projects and...and we could assume those are, you know, with wildland urban interface criteria, I guess you could say.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh. Okay. Mahalo. It's just that it's on the slide, so --

MR. DE ROBLES: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- it --

MR. DE ROBLES: Yes. Yes. It's for '25, so I didn't write too much because this is for '25 and this was for '24. But I can. I...I'd be happy to elaborate.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. I mean, I think it's great. It's just a lot of the, you know, that...I...I think a lot of the grantees manage areas that are...that don't really have that urban interface. So, I was curious as to how many of them and which ones. So, one so far?

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MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah. One I can think of off the top of my head. I have to review because...and also, I think PKW may have proposed something as well, but we need to...you know, our...our...we need to really vet the program because our watershed program requires them to have it integrated into...in their watershed management plan, which has to be updated every four years or so. So, our question to some of these grantees are, have you discussed this with all the land managers and have you discussed it with other organizations that handle fire mitigation right now, and so on and so forth. So, we want to make sure it's integrated well into the program.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. I see Ms. Blumenstein's hand up. Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, she'll...she'll respond and then we'll move on to the next, okay? Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Or, Ms. Blumenstein. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

MS. BLUMENSTEIN: Mahalo, Chair. Sorry for jumping in like this, but --

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's all right.

MS. BLUMENSTEIN: Yeah, I just wanted to add to what Robert was saying also for FY'25, this is the first time we're expanding really beyond those critical, you know, 3,000 feet above elevation watersheds and it's both, you know, to address that wildland urban interface and accomplishing something for a mauka to makai watershed protection. So, we made a deliberate effort to reach out to other potential partners, not...it's not restricted to existing grantees, but we did reach out to several organizations sort of looking for partners that are willing and able to take on this kind of work. So, I think it's going to be a work in process that maybe, you know, by the next fiscal year that is something more extensive.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Let's hope so. Yeah. It's important work. Thank you for that response, Ms. Blumenstein. Chair Lee, you're up and the floor is yours.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Robert, just wondering if you ever have a plan of eradication rather than only mitigation?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. De Robles.

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you. Thank you for the question. And this is I think an enduring question for a lot of our grantees; how can we...or how can they eradicate?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Let me give you an example. There's a whole list of grantees and they probably don't have enough money to actually eradicate the problem. So, what if you gave, one year, the bulk of the money to one grantee to try and eliminate the

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problem and the next year you give the same amount, you know, a lot of money to another grantee to eliminate the problem, rather than every year just manage the problem?

MR. DE ROBLES: That's a really good question. Unfortunately, some of these invasive species is almost impossible to eradicate entirely in one year. I mean, it would require not only funding --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay, two years, you know, it doesn't have to be one year.

MR. DE ROBLES: I mean, since 1997, right? So, we've been trying to eradicate for example, you know, Miconia, right? It...they've been working on that since this program existed. And it's...I'm not...we've been doing a good job of trying to control it, but eradicating it? At this point, even with...even if you threw hundreds of millions...I don't if we'd be able to have enough staff to go out there and...and take care of it in one year or two years. It may take several years.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. The other question I have for you is you're a grant writer?

MR. DE ROBLES: Well...I do know how to write grants, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: What do you mean? Why are you smiling. . . .*(laughing)*. . . Are you a grant writer?

MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah. You could say that, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Have you written for any grants?

MR. DE ROBLES: I...I've gotten...I've written some grants for...for Federal funding, State funding, yes. And...yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Been successful?

MR. DE ROBLES: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Well, maybe you need for more help so we could get more money.

MR. DE ROBLES: I wish.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MR. DE ROBLES: I...I...I...I --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: We'll keep that in mind.

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MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah. Well, I mean...I say this respectfully. That's been the question that we've been trying to ask. How do we give them enough money to be as efficient as possible? And if I could...and if we could give them 10, \$20 million, that'd be great but will it solve the problem realistically? I'm not so sure. It's always about money. Sometimes it's about...yeah...resources, manpower, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Well, if you have enough money, you can pay them what they deserve.

MR. DE ROBLES: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MR. DE ROBLES: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay, very good. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you, Chair Lee. Yeah. Excellent line of questioning. So, Mr. De Robles, is the Department funding for watershed protection maxed out by the proposals of the grantees? Like, is there additional funding needed? Is there a lot of requests that you just...you don't have the funds; you ran out. So, would it help you to have additional funding to...for all the grantees that are applying?

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you for the question. I think...like I said, I think it...it requires us to sit down with each grantee to discuss what their challenges are --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- and the opportunities because sometimes we give grantees a lot of money, but some reason, though...it may be weather, or it may be one or two staff members leaving. Anything could happen where they're not able to utilize all the funding. It would have to be a realistic approach for what they want to do. And sometimes they have to compromise the resources they have to be as efficient as possible to accomplish what they want --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- because, of course, they have a proposal. We have to make sure they could meet the expectations of that...of that proposal and meet what those deliverables are. So, adding to it sometimes...sometimes they come to us and say, hey, can we do this extra? And then we try to do an amendment and try. But we have to vet it --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- and make sure that it's reasonable with the resources that they have --

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- so it could...it could be accomplished.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, you...this...the...the...I kind of felt like that you'd mentioned something about capacity in your Department and we hear that all the time, right? Do you consider yourself short-staffed right now as a Department?

MR. DE ROBLES: I...I'd like to think so. I think this complicated type of grant management requires, really, a full-time person to be able to focus because there's so many moving parts of it. The...for example, we don't have the time to go out and inspect --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- and...and meet with everybody all the time. It really is a...a full-time job.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, your position, for example, helping the grantees and writing grants for Fed and State grants; how many of those are there of you?

MR. DE ROBLES: There's only...well, Edna Manzano. She's a vital component of our program. We manage this together. It's just basically me, Edna Manzano and . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, if we just put in one extra position, we'd doubled your...we doubled your...your capacity, right?

MR. DE ROBLES: Well, it requires training and some knowledge in...in grants management --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- but it would definitely help.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Duly noted. Thank you for that.

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Last question...Amplified Fund *[sic]* software. Is that only in your Department or is that countywide?

MR. DE ROBLES: So, this is a -- it was used in the County several years ago and they've updated the system and we tried it again and we spoke with the Budget Department also and they...I think they've adopted it in some capacity. . . *(timer sounds)*. . . But it...it's --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Do you like it?

MR. DE ROBLES: Well, like everything, there's a learning curve.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DE ROBLES: And we tried to pick the best system we thought was best for us. We looked at many different systems. And so far, it's okay and it's...there's pluses and minuses --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- obviously with every system.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Members, do we need a second round? Because I was going to take a 10...10-minute recess and defer this item. But I don't see any heads shaking or I don't see any hands raised. So, I'd like to thank the Department. Thank you so much, Mr. De Robles, for coming out and educating us. Thank you, Director and...and Ms. Blumenstein. So, thank you so much for your...your explanation of what you guys do.

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, Members, if there's no objections, the Chair will defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. We're going to take a 10-minute recess at...and come back in 3:12, 3:12 p.m. We only have one more item on the agenda. So, the ADEPT Committee of 2/20/24 is in recess until 3:12 p.m. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 3:02 p.m.

RECONVENE: 3:20 p.m.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Will the ADEPT Committee of 2/20/2024 come back? The time is now 3:20. I hope we're nice and refreshed from our break as we go on to the next item, which is our last item on the agenda. It's ADEPT-1(3). Can you hear us? Oh. No one can hear us. Okay. Time out. Mic check, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, hear us? No? Okay. One minute.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair, I can hear you on Channel 53, but I cannot hear you on Teams.

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**ADEPT-1(3): OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

CHAIR JOHNSON: How about now on Teams? Okay. Great. So, I'll just start over. It was just a moment. Will the ADEPT Committee of 2/20/24 come back? The time is now 3:20 p.m.. Thank you, Members, for joining us for the last item on the agenda, ADEPT-1(3), Operational and Budgetary Review of Environmental Protection Grants Administered by the Office of the Mayor. In accordance with Rule 7(B) of the Rules of the Council, the Committee intends to discuss matters relating to operational and budgetary review of environmental protection grants administered by the Office of the Mayor. No legislative action will be taken. Members, in FY 2024, the County set aside 1., or \$1,550,000 in the Office of the Mayor's budget for Environmental Protection grants. These grants administered by the Office of Innovation and Sustainability support important initiatives by our private sector partners, such as endangered species protection and maintenance of near-shore ocean health. Again, as amplified under today's first agenda item, partnering with experts in the community and supporting their efforts to protect our environment will be critical in implementing plans to mitigate climate change. So, let's start today with comments and an update on...from the Office of Economic Development, Director Luana Mahi and then, in regards to the Environmental Protection grants, and also from the Office of Innovation and Sustainability and the Office of Economic Development within the Office of the Mayor, Mr. Drake. So, let's see if...thank you folks for joining us and I see Director Mahi on, so do you have any opening remarks, Director?

MS. MAHI: Actually, I just wanted to let you know that Tuki had to jump into another meeting in regards to REPI, so I've asked Maria Ornellas to be here because she does manage our OIS grants.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great. Are you on the call? Ms....Maria Ornellas, are you on the call?

MS. TANCK: Chair, we do not see her at this time.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. MAHI: I will give her a call again.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's see. So where --

MS. TANCK: Excuse me, Chair. It looks like she just joined. We'll go ahead and unmute her mic.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Okay. Ms. Ornellas, are you on the call right now? Can you...can you unmute your mic if you're here?

MS. ORNELLAS: Aloha. Can you hear me?

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Yep. We can hear you loud and clear. Wonderful. If you're able to have some opening comments on the Environmental Protection grants. Do you have anything to start us off with?

MS. ORNELLAS: Okay. Aloha, Chair Johnson, and Members. Talofa lava, I believe is a greeting.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Perfect.

MS. ORNELLAS: I don't know if it's Tongan or Samoan, but . . .*(inaudible)*. . .cheehoo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Perfect. . . .*(chuckle)*. . . We...we were asking to see if you had anything to start us off with the Environmental Protection grants. Do you have any comments on the Environmental Protection grants for this year?

MS. ORNELLAS: I do. I do apologize. I'm having some background, like, two...I'm hearing you twice, so let me just --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. One thing...if you have two devices on, like the...it will echo into your...that might be the echo, so if you just hit...you only use one device, that might help. I don't know if you have two.

MS. ORNELLAS: Yeah. I'm not quite sure. I haven't done this. Anyways... Aloha. Mahalo, Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to present on the Environmental Protection grants under the Mayor's Office. God, I'm hearing...oh. Anyways, mahalo for the shortcoming. I wasn't intended to...shucks, I'm hearing echoes. I'm so sorry. It's...let me . . .*(inaudible)*. . . for now.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. We can...we can hear you fine. But if you need time, we can take a quick recess and we can sort this out with you because we kind of want to hear. How about...do you think three minutes is okay...two minutes, or do you need five minutes? Okay. Why don't we just take a five-minute recess. Okay? So, the time is 3:25. We'll come back at 3:30, Members. Just a quick recess, we'll get it sorted because I really want to hear what Ms. Ornellas has to say, so the time is now 3:26. The ADEPT Committee will be in recess until 3:30 p.m. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 3:26 p.m.

RECONVENE: 3:31 p.m.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Will the ADEPT Committee of 2/20/24 come back from our short recess? The time is now 3:31 p.m. Thank you everybody for being patient with us. I know Teams is new, so it's...we got a couple hiccups once in a while. But basically, where we left off was Ms. Ornellas giving a status update of the Environmental Protection grants. So, Ms. Ornellas, if you can hear us, the floor is yours.

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MS. ORNELLAS: Well, I think I figured it out. So...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay, Ms. Ornellas. Can you hear us? What happened? We had her just for a moment. She's not hearing us.

MS. TANCK: Ms. Ornellas, this probably won't help if you can't hear us, but when you turned off your speaker, did you by any chance mute it entirely?

MS. ORNELLAS: Oh, I cannot hear that. Okay, wait. . . .*(audio interference)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Can you hear us now?

MS. ORNELLAS: . . .*(audio interference)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Can you hear us now?

MS. ORNELLAS: I can hear you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. ORNELLAS: Can you hear me?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Loud and clear. Whatever you did, you --

MS. ORNELLAS: Okay.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- did perfect. So, all we're asking is if you can give us a status update on the Environmental Protection grants. Sorry.

MS. ORNELLAS: Okay.

CHAIR JOHNSON: It's been a little tricky with the sound, but I think we got you. You can hear us. I can hear you. The floor is yours.

MS. ORNELLAS: All right. Mahalo, Chair. Wasn't expecting to appear, so I'm going to apologize for my shortcomings. At any rate, for the Fiscal Year '24, we have awarded seven grantees...seven grantees.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Ms. Ornellas, can I ask a...a more specific question here? Can you...can you hear us?

MS. ORNELLAS: Yes, go ahead, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. So, in the Environmental Protection under the Office of Mayor, there are four grants that we're looking at: the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council for 325,000. The 600,000 must be used for watershed management, planning and

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environmental by Maui Environmental Consulting, the MEC, or Central Maui Soil and Water Conservation District. The third...the third one would be up to \$103,240 must be used for the Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project, and the last one is up to 40,000 must be for the Haiku Community Association for two independent contractor positions and lab fees coordinating with the online NRDS database. Those are the four grants that are under this section and we wanted to ask on the status of them. Do you have anything, any information on that?

MS. ORNELLAS: I do, Chair. Mahalo for that question. For the first one, the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council, their performance period is just ending, so I haven't executed their Fiscal Year '24. They went on a calendar year from January to December, so they just submitted their last invoice and reporting, so that should be executed soon.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great.

MS. ORNELLAS: Didn't want to do overlapping. The second one for Maui, for watershed management for 600...as you know, we went for a budget amendment to...let's say to re-use or re-purpose that...that allocation. So, I believe that's on the agenda still, too...for the status. For number three, the 103,000 for Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project, that also is...they just finished their Fiscal Year '23. They were on a calendar year, so they just ended. And we're asking them to...or I'm asking to decrease the funding to 70,000, as their project from the current Fiscal Year '23 wasn't, their delivery...their deliverables weren't the greatest for that 103,000, so at 70,000, we're asking them to amend their budget at 70,000. For the 40,000, I believe Lucienne de Naie testified the last time and that...there were problems on locating her application, found it, and I had executed it and so they're on their way to do the water testing for the Haiku Stream. So those are the four grants you asked about.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Ornellas. Okay. Any clarifying...okay. Members, any clarifying...clarification questions? We're going to move on to discussion as well. So, Members, just any clarifications? Seeing none. Let's start...let's go into some opening remarks for some of the folks we...that we made resources in our previous meeting. We have Jay Penniman, Lori Buchanan, and Teya Penniman, who were designated resource persons in the February 8th ADEPT Committee Meeting due to being grant recipients. So, Jay Penniman, Mr. Penniman, are you on the call? I'm just going down the order.

MS. TANCK: Chair, Mr. Penniman is unmuted on our end.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. So, if we don't hear from Mr. Penniman, we can go on to...we'll come back to him, of course, but I'm not hearing him and we're trying to...we unmuted him on our end, so is Lori Buchanan on the call? She is? Ms. Buchanan, are you here?

MS. BUCHANAN: Yes, I am. Aloha, Honorable Members of this awesome Committee. I am here. And also, here I see Teya Penniman, my boss, so I would like to defer to her right

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now because she's actually there. And by the way, Teams suck, Teams suck, again. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: It's testing our patience.

MS. BUCHANAN: But I'm standing by. Anyway, I can also give testimony because --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you.

MS. BUCHANAN: -- I support all of the projects mentioned. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Ms. Buchanan. So, let's move on to Ms. Penniman who's here in Chambers. Ms. Penniman, the floor is yours.

MS. PENNIMAN: Thank you. Aloha, Chair. Aloha, Vice-Chair. Aloha, Chair Lee and aloha, Councilmembers. Thank you for this opportunity. I did have a question, though, about process because I think that the grants that...that Ms. Ornellas talked about didn't include the...the Maui Invasive Species Committee one; is that correct? She didn't talk about that one? So maybe what she was talking about is a...a group of grants that are under a larger catch-all of Environmental Protection grants. So, I believe those are all line items, which ours is as well. So you may want to ask her to talk about the status of ours before...before I given any comments.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure. That...that makes sense. So, that's number 6 under Office of the Mayor. So, Ms. Ornellas, are you here? Can you unmute yourself and give us the Maui Invasive Species Committee for eradication...coqui frogs, little fire ants, Miconia, and other invasive species, 2.8 million? Ms. Ornellas?

MS. TANCK: Chair, she is unmuted on our end.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh. I see your camera, but we can't hear you. Can you hear us?

MS. ORNELLAS: Okay.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. There...there it is.

MS. ORNELLAS: Can you hear me? Okay. So, the UH MISC grant for the 2.8, you didn't ask about that one, Chair. You asked about --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

MS. ORNELLAS: -- the four grants.

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's right.

MS. ORNELLAS: So, I'm going to speak on that grant now.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. ORNELLAS: So, the Fiscal Year '23 grant is still in action. It...it...I think the ending is in June, so we haven't executed Fiscal Year '24.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. That's the status? Okay.

MS. ORNELLAS: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Now, I'm going to just turn over to Ms. Penniman to see if she has any opening remarks. Ms. Penniman.

MS. PENNIMAN: Yes, thank you and...and aloha again. So, Teya Penniman with the Maui Invasive Species Committee. And Ms. Ornellas is, of course, correct on that. Our...our FY'23 grant was executed fairly late and so that will not close out until June 6th. One of the things that is important is that those...that grant process needs to be underway to avoid gaps in funding. There was a question that was asked earlier this afternoon about how to avoid gaps in payroll. It takes several months to get it through the County and then it also takes several months to get it through the University and so the other...the other place that we are right now is that we haven't had a confirmation yet from the County about...from the Mayor's Office about what that total amount will be.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for that. So, Members, do we have any clarifying questions for our...our...let's see...the resource folks? Because otherwise we can get into the deliberations. But we still got to do public testimony. But before we do that, I want to see if we can get Jay Penniman on the call one more time. Mr. Penniman, are...can you try to unmute yourself, and Staff, is he unmuted on our end? You seem to be unmuted on our end, Jay; are...are you here on the call? ...Okay. We're not hearing from him, so we're going to move on. At this time --

MS. TANCK: Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh...yep? Go ahead.

MS. TANCK: Excuse me. Staff has given Mr. Penniman the phone number that he can call into, so he may show up just shortly here.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, should I do some public testimony, or should we take another recess?

MS. TANCK: If we can start with public testimony and then I'll go ahead and alert you when Mr. Penniman is on the call.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. That works for me. All right. At this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise your hand function and unmute yourself. Oh, wait. Let me go back because to...this is our first time for testimony, so...okay.

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MS. TANCK: And Chair, please forgive the interruption, but Mr. Penniman has joined on the phone.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, perfect. Mr. Penniman, are you on the call? Is he by phone or by...because by phone you got to push star six, I think.

MS. TANCK: I think he's unmuted.

MR. PENNIMAN: Hello?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Hello. We can hear you now, Mr. Penniman.

MR. PENNIMAN: Aloha. Yes, I have to agree with Ms. Buchanan. Teams sucks. There's no way for me to unmute from my end here. So, aloha, Chair, Chair Lee, Members. At this point, I kind of got disconnected from where we are. Would you just...you were looking for a statement from me about our current grants?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. PENNIMAN: Thank you. Yes, we've had grants for Na Manu o Ke Kai protection and outreach with the public for ten years now and we've had very good relations with the County. We have had excellent outreach. The work we have done has increased the number of sea birds which is really responsible for aiding the resilience of coastal reef ecosystems and we've...last year were reduced in our budget without any explanation, and I think I need to explain that when we get grants, they...we apply through the University of Hawai'i and in order to process these grants, it takes a couple of months on the University's end. So when we submit a budget and a proposal in July, it is with expectation that--actually, it was in June this year for the line item grant--the expectation that that is what is going to be provided and our planning depends on having that funding. We have worked with the Environmental Coordinator in the past and that agreement was always assumed that that would be the level of funding that we received. This has changed in the last two years. We had to...we had to modify our budget the year before...before we were a line item. This year we became a line item and, again, we are being told once our grant would be reduced to 60,000, then we were told it would be reduced to 70,000. Then I was told by Mr. Drake that I would have the opportunity to discuss our grant with the Grants Review Committee soon. That was two weeks ago when he told me that. And this grant that we proposed was to begin the first of January for the calendar year 2024 and we still don't have an executed grant. We have recently completed our FY'23, which again was executed in February, but not received by the University until April, and then the University had to enter that in. So we needed to go into a budget readjustment on that, due to the delinquency of the grant funds moving. We seem to be coming up with a number of issues that we have never experienced before, and we would really appreciate the opportunity to be able to visit with the Office of Innovation and Sustainability. I did have a conversation with Mr. Cooper last week in which he invited me to present relative to a . . . *(inaudible)*. . . college program that

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he's proposing at the end of March, but...and he listened to my needs for executing this year's funding and so assured me that he heard it but, again, we have heard nothing. And then we just heard Ms. Ornellas again stating that, without explanation, we are being reduced from the line item, which the Council has established. I will --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. PENNIMAN: -- end with that. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Mr. Penniman. Members, do we have any clarifying questions? Otherwise, we're going to get into public testimony and then we can get into deeper questions if we need to. I don't see any hands up, so I'm going to go through to public testimony. So, if you previously testified on any of today's items at the February 8th meeting, please note that you are unable to testify on that item a second time at today's meeting. At this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise hand function and then unmute and identify yourself after I read this short information. Oral testimony via phone or video conference will be accepted in addition to in person testimony. Individuals wishing to testify in person may sign up with a Staff member at the entrance of the Chamber. For those joining the meeting via Microsoft Teams, please let Staff know if you wish to testify by using the raise hand function. Testifiers wanting to provide video or audio testimony should have joined the online meeting via the link or the phone number noted in today's agenda. Written testimony is encouraged, and can be submitted via the eComment link at mauicounty.us/agendas. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item. If you are still testifying beyond that time, I will kindly ask you to complete your testimony. We ask that you state your full name and organization, but if you prefer to testify anonymously, Staff will identify you and refer to you as "Testifier" and assign you a number. Please be courteous to others by turning off your video and muting your microphone while waiting for your turn to testify. Once you are done testifying, or if you do not wish to testify, you can view the meeting on Akakū Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us/agendas. Thank you, all, for your cooperation. The Chair will maintain decorum at all times. Any person who behaves in a manner that disrupts, disturbs, or impedes the orderly conduct of any Council meeting can, at the discretion of the presiding officer or a majority of present Councilmembers be ejected by...or banned from Council meetings or, if participating remotely, muted, or dropped from the meeting. Examples of disruptive behavior including heckling, shouting, use of profanity, threatening or slanderous remarks made to any member of the Council Staff or general public. Councilmembers, I'll now proceed with oral testimony. Staff has been monitoring individuals joining today's meeting by phone and in video and we'll do our best to take each other in an orderly fashion. Staff, will you call the first testifier, please?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the first testifier is Michael Reyes, to be followed by Chelsea Arnott.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay, Mr. Reyes.

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. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. REYES: Aloha Committee Chair, can...can everyone hear me okay?

CHAIR JOHNSON: We can hear you loud and clear.

MR. REYES: Wonderful. Thank you, Members, as well. My name is Michael Reyes with Maui Environmental Consulting. We are obviously a line item in the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. There's been some confusion that I'd like to clarify. In Fiscal Year 2023, we...we wrote the Mā'alaea Bay Watersheds Management Plan, which includes both the watershed for Waikapū and for Waiakoa. Together, those two watersheds are about 45,000 acres. We also did a repair and rehabilitation project on Kēōkea discharges through...through Kihei. And that project's some 3,000 dry land native plants that are using R-1 water from the wastewater treatment facility. And the great thing about that project is that it's in close proximity to Pi'ilani Highway, and so we can get high school students and volunteers there very easily to participate. So, for the Fiscal Year 2024, we...in the line item you'll see it's...it's planning and implementation. And so, for our watershed plan for Fiscal Year '23 and '24, we decided to move north to Kōlea lau nui...because we've essentially finished the southside from...we've got Pōhākea...basically all the way from McGregor's Point all the way down to Makena Landing are now covered, over 100,000 acres are now covered under EPA and Hawai'i Department of Health, approved watershed plans. So...so we're moving north. It's a 20,000-acre watershed plan. But then in addition to that, keeping in...in Kihei both Waipuilani and Kūlanihāko'i gulches discharge immediately north and south of the new Kūlanihāko'i High School. What we thought to do something similar there with 4,000 native plants and 4,000 feet of . . .*(inaudible)*. . . of axis deer, keep the deer out, this would be an opportunity for the high school students to participate in cultural, scientific activities by...by having these dry land native forest restoration projects right out...right out...outside their door at...at their high school. So...so, those are the...our proposals for Fiscal Year 2024 and we...we sent them out. Hopefully everybody has received a copy of them in their emails. And we understand that there has been, you know, some...some issues. We haven't heard anything from the Office of Innovation and Sustainability. We've reached out to them and, you know, we've just...we're.....we're...we're hoping to work with them in whatever capacity we can. We want to make sure that these projects are supported. We're not trying to do anything that's not --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. REYES: -- that's not being supported.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Reyes. You know, this is...I think we...we might have some questions. This is in regards to your program. So, would you be available for a resource?

MR. REYES: Absolutely, yes.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, without objection, I'll designate Mr. Reyes as a resource person under Rule 18(A) of the Council, given his expertise in this matter, being that he's in the budget for that line item. Any...any objection, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objection.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much. So, we'll...we'll have any...we might have questions for you during discussion, Mr. Reyes, so please hold on. Staff will you call the next testifier?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Chelsea Arnott, to be followed by Red Skelton.

MS. ARNOTT: Yes. Aloha, Chair, Vice-Chair, Members of the Committee. Nice to be here. Again, my name is Chelsea Arnott and I'm with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, but my primary role is doing program support for our Hawai'i Invasive Species Council which was established in 2003 for statewide coordination on invasive species and it's co-chaired by the current chairs of the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture. We submitted our eComments just wanting to give a huge mahalo to the County of Maui for really stepping up and recognizing the importance of watershed management and invasive species work that's really needed for the health of the environment, our communities, and food security, and increasing our island resiliency in a changing climate. Definitely watershed protection is huge, but I'm mostly familiar with the Maui Invasive Species Committee and the Moloka'i Invasive Species Committee since our Hawaiian Invasive Species Council has been applying State funding to both these programs which has been really important for their operations. But what's been huge is that the additional funding from the County of Maui has really expanded their ability to do work in prevention and management in invasive species with Moloka'i eradicating Albizia from their island. Over on Maui, they've developed that aerial treatment to manage huge infestations of little fire ants over in Nāhiku. And these are not only tools that are so beneficial for your County, but we're also looking at applying those tools and technologies to our other islands, so we can be able to manage things like little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, and invasive plants across the State, so we can really protect our...our communities and our economy and our environment from the...the threats of invasive species. And I just wanted to really mahalo the County for the continued support you've given to, you know, the Maui Invasive Species Committees and Moloka'i Invasive Species Committee and also the Watershed Partnerships. It's made a huge difference in invasive species management. So, I really appreciate the opportunity to provide comments. Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you for your testimony. Members, do we have any questions? We do have one from Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Ms. Arnott. Mahalo for your testimony today and for highlighting a lot of the...you know, accomplishments of the MISC. So, do you find that with...with the funding from Maui County in supporting

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both our invasive species control organizations that that's really been effective in helping our organizations, as opposed to the other islands?

MS. ARNOTT: Yes. So, we probably give around three million for the last four years of our Hawaiian Invasive Species Council appropriation to support the five island invasive species committees and those funds just really provide baseline operational funding, so current staff at current salary. So, there's not really any ability for them to adjust, you know, salaries or buy additional equipment or even take on new target species. We're always having new pest incursions and these organizations are constantly having to reprioritize what they take on, but with the organizations like Moloka'i Invasive Species Committees and the Maui Invasive Species Committees, they're still restrained by resources, but with the addition of the County funds, they've been able to have and maintain a larger staff. And I mean, today I can speak to this better and so could Lori, but I feel like they were able to retain a lot of their...their leadership and their staff also. And they also are developing these new tools and technology that the other programs just don't have the capacity to do. I mean, Maui Invasive Species Committees, they have their own little fire ant team, just dedicated to that species and they have the Community Coqui Control Program. I mean, these are amazing and we really want to apply these tools to other places and it's also Maui County is really the template that we're taking right now, working with our City and County of Honolulu, on how to get more support from them and then the other counties across the State and just saying, like, look what Maui County has done for invasive species management and really looking to you folks as...as that guide.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for that response. I think it's, like, such an important voice to hear, because sometimes, you know, you know County silo discussions so to...to get that kind of feedback from someone, you know, higher...higher, you know, that has a broader view of what's going on pae 'aina wide so that we have an understanding of the impact that, you know, that we're having in our County and how that compares to the other counties and their battles against invasive species. Chair, I don't know if Ms. Arnott would want to, or has time to, you know, serve as a resource, but if anyone else has...I...I kind of have like non-clarifying questions, so...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. Ms. Arnott, are you...are you available to stick around for --

MS. ARNOTT: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. ARNOTT: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, without objection, Members, Rule 18(A) of the Council, I'd like to designate her as a resource person, on...based on this topic matter of invasive species and whatnot. Does everybody agree? Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objection.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Thank you, Ms. Arnott. Staff, will you call the next testifier, please?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next and currently last person signed up to testify is Red Skelton.

MR. LAW: Aloha awakea, Chair Johnson. Aloha kākou, Councilmembers. A skeleton crew here. And a special aloha to the Upcountry Councilmember, Yuki Lei Sugimura, Kashiwa Sugimura. Jasee Law from Kula Uka, Waiakoa Ahupua'a. You boomers might remember the comedian Red Skelton. Well, I get jokes. Why did the can crusher quit his job? Because it was soda --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: No can.

MR. LAW: It was soda pressing.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Ooh. Thank you.

MR. LAW: I know.

CHAIR JOHNSON: [*Spoke in Japanese*]. That's a...I'm just going to say that in Japanese. I'm won't say anything.

MR. LAW: Speaking of depressing...I've been hoping to get a recycle grant for my...my town in Kula. We desperately need a drop-off center in Kula Uka. I tried to partner with the churches in Waiakoa Town, but they both, the Holy Ghost Roman Catholics and the King's Cathedral, Kula ran me out of the 'aina and accused me of collecting garbage. I propose the County look at raising the processing fee for the churches that are not using the 'aina for the highest and best use of the community.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you, Mr. Skelton. Any questions for our...our...our testifier? Seeing none. Thank you once again. Staff, do we have any more testifiers?

MS. MCKINLEY: No, Chair. No one else has indicated an...willingness to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Last call for any testimonies. Raise your hand and unmute yourself. Seeing none. Members, are there any objections to closing oral testimony for ADEPT-1(3)?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objection.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. We'll now close public testimony for this item.

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. . . END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Let's enter our discussion on this time, Members. Our resource personnel and departmental representatives are here to answer any further questions you might have regarding the operational and budgetary review of Environmental Protection grants by...administered by the Office of the Mayor. I propose three minutes per Councilmember for each round of discussion and why don't we go in reverse order this time. So, we'll start with Council Chair Alice Lee, followed by Committee Member Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. So, Chair Lee, do you have any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I do. I'm not sure if this will be for Maria Ornellas or Luana Mahi. Could you go over again the grant appropriation for Maui Nui Seabird and explain again why they're not getting their full appropriation?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director Mahi or Ms. Ornellas?

MS. ORNELLAS: I...I think I can speak to that. Thank you, Chair Lee. So, the 103,240. So, the --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Is she frozen?

CHAIR JOHNSON: No.

MS. ORNELLAS: I'm hearing you twice; so sorry for the delay. So, for the Fiscal Year '23, their deliverables weren't...they were given...they weren't able to...I think they're able to do 70,000 last year. We removed the taxidermy, so that's why he was at 70,000 for Fiscal Year '23. So...can you guys hear me?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes. So --

MS. ORNELLAS: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Maria. So, Maria, are you saying that they're using less because they removed some part of their previous program?

MS. ORNELLAS: Well, we removed the taxidermy that they wanted to create and showcase. That's what...I think that was at 30,000. So, that's why the funding for 70,000 was allocated for Fiscal Year '23. So, like I said, it just got finished February 8 or January on a calendar year, so they're able to spend it. It was executed in February. It wasn't until August that they had invoice or done reporting. So, I know Mr. Penniman said UH...because of the late execution. I don't understand that. UH has a delay and so it happened in April. But I...August is, like, four months down the road, so I don't understand his rationale with that. And I believe he's used to, if I may say, he's used to

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past funding. And their deliverables aren't quite there, you know...a more comprehensive report, not just reporting on Kamaole III, eight...three cats, four mongoose. We pay for a outreach liaison. He's adding two. You don't need two liaison if you're just reporting on Kamaole III. So, that's where the 103,000 came in with two liaisons. So, I think he can do with just one liaison, outreach liaison.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. All right.

MS. ORNELLAS: And I just don't come up with the numbers myself. It's a committee that comes up. And your past practice, your past performance dictates your...your score, the funding we'd like to offer. So, that's the justification...that's how we came up with the number.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. I'll ask more later. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's move on to Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. So, my first question is for Ms. Teya...oh, no. Okay. Ms. Teya said earlier that the MISC is unsure what the total amount will be and they haven't been given any certainty. So, for Ms. Ornellas, do you have that information? Will it be the amount that the Council approved that the Mayor proposed that will be the amount that is allocated and granted to MISC?

MS. ORNELLAS: I'm going to defer to Director Mahi.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director Mahi?

MS. MAHI: So, we are hoping to probably put out an RFP for this work, because some of their past practices has not been transparent. We've met with UH, their fiscal sponsor, as well as Teya Penniman and asked very specific questions. And, you know, we've...obviously, I've only been here for a little over a year, but we've been giving them, from what I understand from Councilmember Sugimura, about \$2 million for the last 23 years. And they have mentioned that they have coqui frogs managed in Maliko Gulch, but we know that they're outside of that, coqui frogs exist outside of that. There are other areas that we can go into later, but when I asked Ms. Penniman how much would it cost to get rid of coqui frogs on the island, she mentioned \$8 million a year for the next 10 years. I don't know where these numbers come from but, you know, to me, she's gotten over--or the organization has gotten, over 40 million over the last 23 years and we still have coqui frogs. Obviously, we don't have complete control at the airports and the harbors where these things are coming in from, so probably more collaborative work with the Department of Agriculture is needed as well.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh. Mahalo, Director Mahi. So, I...I don't know if those numbers are correct. Because I remember when we got onto the Council in 2019, it was the 2019 Council that really increased the amount of funding that MISC was getting and that was under Member Sinenci's leadership of the Environmental Committee at the time that we increased for Miconia and for coqui frogs. Former Member Molina...you know, because it affected Maliko Gulch specifically and then those that live above that area...he also advocated for more funding so that they would work with the community, which they have been, in really controlling the spread from Maliko Gulch. And when we asked back in 2019, 2020, I think that was Mr. Radcliff [sic] or Adam, like how much it...like what it would take to, you know, eradicate in Maliko Gulch. It was a really large number because it's a gulch and there isn't really easy access. Like we would need, like, helicopters and like, consistent like, spraying of the gulch and just...just how much work it would require. And then, Department of Transportation is in charge of the...the ports. I don't...I don't know what MISC's involvement is...is there. So, the...the...the thought of it going out to RFP, one, jeopardizes all of the jobs under MISC right now and is kind of giving me heart palpitations right now, because like as Oahu scrambles to get some control over the spread of the little fire ants, coconut rhinoceros beetle, coqui, they're looking to MISC for help. Our invasive species control has been looked at as leaders with the success that they've been having. If...if we don't continue to support MISC, Department of Ag will not fill in. Department of Ag just had a hearing last month on the rule change that...to...to amend Chapter 72, that is...that they're aware of businesses that are selling merchandize to the public that are infested with invasive species. And they haven't even approved that. All they can do is ask a business to stop selling on a volunteer basis. And if these bad actors that have the merchandise that, if...if the products are being stored in an area known to be infested, they can continue to sell and spread invasive species. Like, being in that hearing, it just...it's...we...we have to do everything that we can. And if there's any interruption in...in...in the service that we've been providing to the...to the community to control the spread of invasive species, like the other...like the other counties, we're going to lose the battle. And we've already done such good work with the control of the LFA. I just...it...it...it's alarming to me. I'm sure the alarm...my timer went. I'm sorry about that, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: We're getting close to the end time. So, we'll try to go...you know, if...if we need second round, we'll try to do that as well. Let's move on to Councilmember Tom Cook, followed by Councilmember--or Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. My question was for Mr. Reyes. The...how many grants have you had from the County over how many years?

MR. REYES: We had a Fiscal Year 2023 grant and then...we were a line item in Fiscal Year 2023...in 2024. And...and that's it for...for MEC.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, this was all...did the County tell you that there was any issues with your reporting or accountability for the previous grant?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. Reyes.

MR. REYES: No. And we're actually pretty proud the...for the Mā'alaea Watershed Management Plan, which again is...is Waikapū and Waiakoa. We had it approved within the year of...of our Fiscal Year 2023 line item and, because that was approved by the Hawai'i Department of Health, and because Waiakoa had both the Kula and the Pūlehu fires occur in it, we were able to have the Hawai'i Department of Health set aside all of their funding for the year to...for fire...for fire recovery for those efforts, and so it was an immediate benefit to the County, you know, having had that watershed plan approved.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Chair, so I...I walked up there with you and you showed me where you're utilizing the R-1 water for pastures and also for MISC plants. Is that part of...is that continuing of that...a part of this new grant?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. Reyes.

MR. REYES: Thank you for your question, Member Cook. So, that project that you visited was...is on Keokea Gulch which is just south of the two gulches that...that we're currently proposing to do that same work on, so...so we would be fencing off these areas protecting them from Axis deer and then installing irrigation infrastructure and then planting dry land native forest species, and that's for Kūlanihāko'i and Waipuilani Gulch, which those gulches basically border the new Kihei high school, which is Kūlanihāko'i High School. And...and so I encourage anyone who does want to come out and see the Keokea repair and rehabilitation project. We just had Seabury High School students out there to plant wiliwili trees.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair.

MR. REYES: Thank you, Councilmember.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's move on to Committee Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And I, too, agree with Member Rawlins-Fernandez. This is not the time, Chair to be pivoting away from MISC and MOMISC. Just last week in Washington, D.C., Esther Kia'aina from the Honolulu City Council pleaded with all of our congressional delegates the importance of addressing the coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation. They have spent over \$18 million trying to address this and they...and they lost the battle. And currently, there's public outcry for the Governor to create some kind of emergency proclamation to try and stop this beetle from spreading to all of our other islands. So, for me this is not the time. We did put in extra funding

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for MISC and MOMISC because Maui County relies on a very exuberant property taxes. That's where we get a lot of our revenue. So, if we...if the County loses property taxes to invasive species, you can just look at Hawai'i County. Hawai'i County is just inundated with invasive species. If Maui ever gets to that point, our revenues from property taxes would drop...drop significantly. If we don't...if the Department of Water Supply doesn't address invasive species in our watersheds, that means a lot of those invasive species are sucking up all the water in our watersheds and less water for the next 30, 50 years. So, those are the important reasons why we need to quickly and invest into our environment, so that we have the revenues from property taxes and we have water for future generations, Chair. So, whatever it is. I mean, I think MISC and MOMISC have proven their expertise and their professionalism in this so, I mean, we need to rely on their expertise. And when you look at the funding that other counties are having to deal with, especially Oahu, you know, 2 million is a drop in the bucket from what they've already spent. And so, all of our congressional delegates, Ed Case, Mazie Hirono, Brian Schatz, Ed...they all heard from all of the counties that they want this invasive species to stop from spreading. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Committee Vice-Chair Sinenci. Okay. I...I have some questions. So, the Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project, the 103,000; that was one of my priorities that this body voted on to support and we put that money in. And it's really...it's disheartening when the...when the Administration doesn't fulfill, you know, continue on the...continue on with the priorities that we put in. It's...I want to say that... I want to ask Jay Penniman if the cut in this funding will not let him reach...get his outreach person and protect the two colonies. Remember, I was informed that the group only...was only partially funded for the...for the last fiscal year. That meant that they could not hire an outreach position and could not fully execute predator control. We often hear that Hawai'i is the endangered species capital of the world and human impacts are causing species decline at an alarming rate. We hear that all the time. We also heard about...last year about the seabirds, how important the seabirds. We wrote the bill, did the lighting bill and how...what, what that does, what seabird guano does to our...our...our reef and our...our native plants. So, if, Mr. Penniman, what...what effects would happen if this money got cut to you? I...I heard from the Administration that you were going to do a...what do you call it...taxidermy and things of that nature. Can you clarify that?

MR. PENNIMAN: Thank you, Chair. I'm happy to try to provide a little clarification. In last year's budget, we were reduced from our previous three years of 85,000, which provided us with a three-quarter time outreach professional and predator control that you spoke about. And our outreach professional is responsible for the community interactions, relationships development, and volunteer support that keeps us going. We managed to keep that going with the reduction of 15,000 from our previous budgets by taking funding from other projects. The budget that we had requested in FY'23 included increasing our outreach professional to a full-time position. We have never asked for a second outreach professional. And that would be the bulk of that increase from 85,000 to 103,240. And in addition to that, we did request funding for doing taxidermy. One of the most effective means of communicating with our public is to have mounted

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seabirds at events that we go to. They give us the opportunity for children, especially, to be drawn in. They bring their parents with them. Our staff has the opportunity to show people what a seabird looks like up close and personal. Seabirds have unique --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. PENNIMAN: -- characteristics that we can then describe and people can appreciate and then they respond. Learning about these birds, the importance of them, they see a seabird in distress; they know to get to us.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Penniman. I...I just got a little data point for our...our...our Councilmembers and everybody who's following along. For every dollar spent on biosecurity, the State is potentially saving \$8,000 on the economic impacts that invasive species and diseases can bring. That's...that's big money there, folks, so I think...and that was from Civil Beat, January 27, 2023; that was an article that explained that. So, we're going to go another round, if anybody has questions. Okay, we do have. So, we'll just go back down. So, let's start with Council Chair Alice Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. I'm sorry, Chair. I do have to leave in like one minute.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Feel free.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, I'm going to ask Director Mahi. Director Mahi, how many --

MS. MAHI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- grants do you have to administer in your office?

MS. MAHI: Altogether with the OIS grants, about 350.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And how many managers do you have?

MS. MAHI: Seven.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Seven. Okay. Because, you know, we...my Department also managed grants and so for a little over 100 grants we had six grants managers. So, I think you're really understaffed. And...and what happens is...I'm not blaming you for anything, but generally what happens when you're not staffed sufficiently, your grantees also need your support. In other words, continual site inspections and conversations to see how everybody is doing and if they need extra help, you know, with reporting or applications, et cetera. So, I hope that when budget rolls around very soon, that you'll ask the Council for more help because, clearly, that's way too many grants per person. And so, I can't even imagine having to deal with 300-plus grants with only seven people. So, thank you very much and I look forward to your request at budget time. Thank you.

MS. MAHI: Thank you.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Chair. Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Director Mahi, so earlier you said that you're looking into an RFP for the invasive species control funding. I...I think that funding...I don't have the budget in front of me right now, but isn't it a line item to MISC?

MS. MAHI: It is.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh. Okay. And the idea of going out to an RFP or of doing an RFP, is that already like the...the set plan? Or is it something that you folks are still discussing?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director Mahi.

MS. MAHI: We're still discussing it.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then...I mean, I don't know of any other orgs...organizations that do invasive species control. Do...do you know of other organizations that would bid on the...the RFP if...if made public?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director Mahi.

MS. MAHI: I...I do not. And I hopefully in more discussions with the fiscal sponsor, University of Hawai'i, we can get more transparency from MISC and MOMISC. Because we have met with them. We've met both with Teya and Lori and we just, you know, we have some deliverables that we need. We have reporting that we need to get from them that are more in-depth, because what we're seeing on our side is we're spending a lot of money but not getting the results that we need.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then are...are those things, like, being clearly communicated back and forth. I don't...I don't know if maybe in writing, and then that way everyone's on the same page about what it is that OED is looking for so that MISC can provide it to OED if they're not fulfilling their deliverables. Because, I mean, from what I'm seeing, they're...they're...I mean, like, they're controlling like LFA and being...like, they're close to getting them eradicated.

MS. MAHI: Right. I know that Maria speaks with and communicates with the fiscal sponsor who turns in the reports quite regularly. I don't know if she speaks directly with the project manager.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So...so I don't know if like maybe lines of communication can be clearer for each. Okay. Okay.

MS. MAHI: Yeah. We will definitely work on that.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And...and I wanted to ask Ms. Buchanan. So, last month there was a 20-inch gopher snake that you testified about that can grow up to, like, seven feet that was discovered on Moloka'i. What...what are the protocols when an invasive species like that is found?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Ms. Buchanan.

MS. BUCHANAN: Thank you for that question, Keani. All hands-on deck. That's what happens. Years of planning kick in. You know, we do like military incident command stuff for this...for this thing. We...we for years have done nothing but plan about what is going to happen when a ship snake shows up on Moloka'i. And the awesome thing about it is, when the snake did show up on Moloka'i, everything that could have happened and should have happened, did happen. We did catch the snake. I likened it to finding a needle in a haystack. It was alive. And everything that could have gone right went right. The protocols was followed. We...Maui Police Department, Moloka'i Police Department responded at the same time they had me on with the 911 operator. I activated my team. We all convened at the time, even before the snake [sic] was dispatched. I phoned Teya Penniman. She initiated all of the response. Within minutes, we had a group chat going on that we had experts on, everyone willing to assist us in finding out stuff like is this snake venomous. Does our hospital, if anybody gets bitten, do we have the antivenom. You know, all of that kind of stuff is...is going at the speed of light in this type of rapid response, early detection. And that's what we train for. I mean, I have a lot of certifications and training, hazard analysis, critical control point training. We get brown tree snake training. Everybody...we have the tools to catch snakes, you know. So...and...and then...Department of Ag, we knew the protocol was, the minute we caught the snake was to hand it over to the Department of Ag, which came from Maui. And I understand it came...our Governor actually signed their emergency travel, so they could get on the next plane to come to Moloka'i to receive this just like a case, a regular police case to get the evidence because it's the Department of...the State Department of Ag that actually has the legal authority to do what they call back trace. Where did this snake come from? Should we quarantine the entire, you know, shipment. In the meantime, MOMISC staff is going through every bag in that warehouse looking for additional snakes, eggs, anything. So, there's a whole stuff that...that happened in a really short amount of time. And I don't think --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. BUCHANAN: -- anybody else could have handled it. Thank you, Gabe. Thank you for the question. Oh, so exciting. . . .(inaudible). . . Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Buchanan. And mahalo for getting that snake and not letting it spread, like in Guam. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. Thank you. I love the passion, Ms. Buchanan. Anyone for second round questions? Okay. I...I have a quick question for the Department. You know,

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the...the 600,000 for the watershed...the watershed planning and implementation, you know, the intent of the line item was for continued funding toward the goal of covering the entire County in Department of Health-approved watershed plans. Department of Health-approved plans can receive EPA Section 319 funding and have a proscribed process to bring the stakeholders and identify priority implementation projects. So basically, by having those plans, we get Federal funding. And I...I really think that that's so important. If you, Members, if you recall, we had...what's the bill number, Bill 8. Remember Bill 8? They were going to take the 600,000 out of it but we filed that bill. We really...I think that shows the...this body is concerned about our watersheds and we want to put money into our watersheds especially when it opens up bigger valves of flow...flowing money to us. That's EPA money. That's...that's why I keep...I'm...I'm scratching my head over why we're not funding these folks because they're doing such great work and it comes back in spades, as they say. So, Members, we're at 4:32, and I want to thank everybody for coming and all the...all the folks who spoke on this and all of the resources, really appreciate you. Councilmember Cook, you had your hand up before we adjourn?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to say that the work that I saw being done, I'm hoping it continues. I know that the Administration has all of the different criteria for reviews and approvals, but that work, mirroring what you just said, Chair, it is super important that our streams and gulches get the invasive species removed, gets the native plants replaced. The...what I saw with utilizing the R-1 water --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- for re-pasteurization and the...the mechanics of determining how we can effectively use this R-1 water over a long period of time safely. So, I'm just...I really want the...what I saw to continue and I'm hopeful it does. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well said. Well said. Okay, Members. If there's no objections, the Chair will defer this --

MS. TANCK: Chair, excuse me. Councilmembers Rawlins-Fernandez had her hand up.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, beg your pardon. Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, final thoughts?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh. Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, Staff, for seeing my hand. I just wanted to quick...quickly...you know, earlier I...I asked about the RFP and if there...there is no one else in mind to bid on it and time is of the essence and, you know, funding our invasive species control needs to happen as quickly as possible so that...you know, every day is a...is a battle with invasive species spreading. And so, if, I guess I...I don't understand why the RFP is being discussed if there is no one else in mind who would bid on it because, as you heard from Ms. Buchanan, it's MISC that has the relationships and protocols in place to act quickly and effectively to stop the spread. And they're already there and so the funding needs to be released for them. And then Ms. Ornellas, you know, talked about a scoring sheet on how, like, grantees

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performance. So, you know, DHHC transmits that scoring sheet to Council so that we can see how they're scoring their grantees based on their performance. So, if something like that, you know, and then that way it can be clearly communicated to their grantees, you know, where the deliverables aren't being met. And then, you know, both the organization and the Administration are on the same page about where the performance needs to be improved, so that funding isn't being held and jeopardizing the operations altogether. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. Well said. I...you know, I'll say, Director Mahi, hearing a lot...those...the amount of grants you were saying and the amount of people who are covering those grants, you need help and I...I totally understand it. You...I would really recommend having an environmental specialist in OED to do...deal with these types of grants. That would really, I think, get the ball rolling. So, I...I...I appreciate you, all your hard work, Director Mahi, and everybody else in the Administration, but...you know, these things...our problems only compound and expand. And so, if...if you're short on staff, if you need an environmental specialist in OED, come budget season, we're going...we going to fight that fight. I will fight for that, so just to let you know.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. We got some final words from Councilmember Sinenci.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah, I, too, wanted to mahalo Director Mahi and her just coming on hearing and 350 grants is a lot, so I too support getting her more help and especially addressing these environmental grants. But like I had mentioned earlier, the other counties are looking to Maui County for their answers in dealing with their invasive species problems. And so, they...MISC and MOMISC must be doing something right all these years that they're wanting to follow Maui County's model. So, I...I do also want to support them. They've kept Maui, you know, invasive...not invasive-free, but at least we've addressed a lot of those attacks when we did have them. So, again, mahalo. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well said, Vice-Chair Sinenci. Members, I think we had a really good discussion and once again, I want to thank everybody for joining this meeting and sharing their mana'o. If there's no objection, Staff, I'll defer this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objection.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

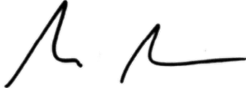
CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay, Staff, I said...Members, I'm sorry. Staff, any...anything else before the...before the Committee. Nothing? Okay, so the...the time is now 4:37 p.m., 2/20/2024, the ADEPT Committee Meeting is now adjourned. . . .(gavel). . .

ADJOURN: 4:37 p.m.

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APPROVED:



GABE JOHNSON, Chair
Agriculture, Diversification, Environment,
and Public Transportation Committee

adept:min:240220r

Transcribed by: Charlotte Hunter

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CERTIFICATION

I, Charlotte Hunter, hereby certify that pages 1 through 54 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 66th day of March 2024, in Wailuku, Hawaii



Charlotte Hunter