

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI

CLIMATE ACTION, RESILIENCE, AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

October 22, 2021

**Committee
Report No. 21-97**

Honorable Chair and Members
of the County Council
County of Maui
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Chair and Members:

Your Climate Action, Resilience, and Environment Committee, having met on September 29, 2021, makes reference to County Communication 17-231, from Councilmember Elle K. Cochran, relating to visitor impacts to County environmental and infrastructural resources.

By correspondence dated September 22, 2021, the Chair of your Committee transmitted a proposed resolution entitled "URGING THE MAYOR TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HO'OMĀHUA INITIATIVE."

The purposes of the proposed resolution are to support the implementation of the Ho'omāhua Initiative and to urge the Mayor to also support the implementation of the Ho'omāhua Initiative.

Your Committee notes that the Council's Infrastructure and Environmental Management Committee (2017-2019 Council term) met on October 15, 2018, and December 3, 2018.

Your Committee further notes that the Council's Environmental, Agricultural, and Cultural Preservation Committee (2019-2021 Council term) met on June 18, 2019; July 2, 2019; August 20, 2019; November 21, 2019; September 22, 2020; October 6, 2020; and November 17, 2020.

Your Committee notes that according to the Maui County General Plan 2030, the Maui County Tourism goal is "To strategically manage tourism on Maui, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i in a sustainable manner that

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promotes economic well-being, quality of life for residents, preservation of natural and cultural resources, and quality experiences for visitors.”

Your Committee received a computer-generated presentation from Ohana ‘Ekolu LLC, and information and analysis from Bay Park Data Solutions and Quanergy Systems, Inc.

A representative from ‘Ohana ‘Ekolu LLC provided information on the Ho‘omāhua Initiative, whose purpose is to perpetuate Native Hawaiian culture, create Native Hawaiian economic opportunities, and grow a Hawaii circular economy. The representative said the Ho‘omāhua Initiative utilizes Smart Tourism™ technology, which will:

- harness smart, regenerative tourism to create thriving communities;
- enable tourists to make intelligent decisions, allowing them to see real-time data of hotspot crowding;
- connect tourists to stakeholders and create a tool for economic resilience, cultural perpetuation, and appreciation;
- grow the circular economy; and
- deliver objective data that can shape policy and improve public safety.

The representative from ‘Ohana ‘Ekolu LLC provided an overview of the technology used in Smart Tourism™. The representative also said Smart Tourism™ is a blend of web and mobile applications featuring software using artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (“IoT”) devices, Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information System Mapping use in software development, machine learning, and spatial and location recognition for the tourism industry.

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The representative said IoT LiDAR devices are human and animal eye-safe lasers that provide real-time data reporting. They also identify and track people, animals, and vehicles and are integrated with camera systems.

Your Committee noted the application and dashboards are built on the Esri platform and use Global Information Systems Mapping. The application and dashboards also incentivize decision-making, allow users to utilize a reservation system, and gather data. The application is intended to be free, and can notify users if an area is overcrowded and offer alternatives.

A representative from Quanergy Systems, Inc. noted 5G technology is not required to use the application, which can be accessed with 2G, 3G, and 4G technologies.

Your Committee noted a resolution expressing support for the Ho‘omāhua Initiative enables ‘Ohana ‘Ekolu LLC to apply for a grant from the Economic Development Administration’s Indigenous Communities Program.

Your Committee revised the proposed resolution to correct the spelling of an organization and to remove Rod Antone, Executive Director of the Maui Hotel & Lodging Association, as a recipient of a certified copy of the resolution.

Your Committee voted 7-0 to recommend adoption of the revised proposed resolution. Committee Chair King, Vice-Chair Sinenci, and members Johnson, Lee, Molina, Paltin, and Sugimura voted “aye.”

Your Committee is in receipt of a revised proposed resolution, incorporating your Committee’s recommended revisions and nonsubstantive revisions.

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Your Climate Action, Resilience, and Environment Committee RECOMMENDS that Resolution 21-170, attached hereto, entitled "URGING THE MAYOR TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HO'OMĀHUA INITIATIVE," be ADOPTED.

This report is submitted in accordance with Rule 8 of the Rules of the Council.



KELLYTAKAYA KING, Chair

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Resolution

No. _____

URGING THE MAYOR TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HO'OMĀHUA INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the United Nations World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”; and

WHEREAS, the visitor industry is important to the County as a major economic driver; and

WHEREAS, according to the Maui County General Plan 2030, the Maui County tourism goal is, “To strategically manage tourism on Maui, Molokaʻi, and Lānaʻi in a sustainable manner that promotes economic well-being, quality of life for residents, preservation of natural and cultural resources, and quality experiences for visitors”; and

WHEREAS, Maui Island visitor arrivals in 2019 increased by 5.4 percent to 3,071,596, a milestone that made it the fifth consecutive record-breaking year, according to the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority; and

WHEREAS, continued growth in the number of visitors to Maui Island is projected for the next few years, and according to the Maui County Tourism Industry Strategic Plan 2017-2026, includes plans to “increase structural capacity to accommodate more visitors”; and

WHEREAS, to ensure economic and environmental sustainability, tourism-based economies must “shift focus from promotion to broader planning and management challenges,” according to a May 2018 paper entitled “Rethinking Hawaii Tourism: Time to Shift from Marketing to Managing Tourism?” by Professor Emeritus James Mak of the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa; and

WHEREAS, visitors should be provided information allowing them to engage in sustainable travel, including how to identify companies that follow sustainable practices, how to minimize waste, the importance of buying local, and reef-safe sunscreen; and

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WHEREAS, page 60 of the Countywide Policy Plan directs policy makers to “monitor the carrying capacity of the islands’ social, ecological, and infrastructure systems with respect to the economy”; and

WHEREAS, there are no real-time data resources available to objectively share how many people are visiting a point of interest (“hotspot”) or series of hotspots that can enable a resident or visitor to make an informed decision of traveling to such areas; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of objective data to understand when and how many people visit hotspots that allows for decision makers to better understand and serve their community needs; and

WHEREAS, ‘Ohana ‘Ekolu LLC, a Native Hawaiian majority-owned business, has proposed the Ho‘omāhua Initiative in partnership with nonprofit organizations and community stakeholders to provide a holistic approach to tourism management called Smart Tourism™; and

WHEREAS, the Ho‘omāhua Initiative will, through its nonprofit stakeholders, actively fundraise and work to incubate and accelerate Native Hawaiian-owned businesses and Hawai‘i Domestic businesses to be incorporated into the Smart Tourism app to promote a circular economy in Hawai‘i; and

WHEREAS, the Ho‘omāhua Initiative will connect residents and visitors to volunteer opportunities with stakeholder nonprofit organizations and community partners to grow regenerative tourism opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Smart Tourism™ is a blending of web and mobile applications featuring software using artificial intelligence, Internet of Things devices, Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information System Mapping use in software development, machine learning, and spatial and location recognition for the tourism industry; and

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WHEREAS, Smart Tourism™ is able to:

- enable intelligent decision-making for residents and visitors to manage their travel through real-time data being transmitted to an application;
- incentivize residents and visitors to make decisions that reduce the impact of congested hotspots when utilizing the application and receiving real-time alerts;
- highlight Kanaka Maoli-Native Hawaiian businesses and artisans to enable meaningful connections between tourists and the Kanaka Maoli community with the express purpose of inspiring youth to see the value in keeping their cultural traditions and practices alive;
- aid in a better management of resources to an area through a reservation system;
- increase public safety with an understanding of hotspot conditions;
- improve resident satisfaction with tourism by reducing tourism load to communities; and
- generate objective data to inform decision-makers about their communities; and

WHEREAS, although the 2018 Hawai'i Tourism Resident Sentiment Survey found the visitor industry is generally viewed favorably, residents seek more than economic benefits, such as "having a voice in tourism development, presenting Native Hawaiian culture authentically and preserving Native Hawaiian Culture"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it supports the implementation of the Ho'omāhūa Initiative;

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2. That it urges the Mayor to support the implementation of the Ho'omāhua Initiative; and
3. That certified copies of this Resolution be sent to Paulo Faleafine, Chief Executive Officer, 'Ohana 'Ekolu LLC; Martha Rodgers, Chief Executive Officer, Bay Park Data Solutions; Kevin J. Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer, Quanergy; John De Fries, President and Chief Executive Officer, Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Sherry Duong, Executive Director, Maui Visitors Bureau; John Monahan, President & Chief Executive Officer, Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau; Scot "Hoapili" Patrick, President, Nā Mea Tke 'Ia; the Honorable Michael P. Victorino, Mayor, County of Maui; Suzanne Case, Chairperson, Board of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i; and the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor, State of Hawai'i.

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