



Esteemed members of the County Council, thank you for your time and your ongoing dedication to serving the County of Maui.

My name is Nikki Russell, and I am the Chief of Operations at Maui Humane Society. I am here today to testify in support of our Humane Enforcement contract. We are profoundly grateful for the County's continued support, which allows Maui Humane Society to provide essential animal control and humane enforcement services for our community.

As you are aware, MHS is contracted by Maui County to respond to the needs of animals and residents across the island of Maui. In FY24, our officers responded to more than 3,804 calls for service, brought in 951 stray animals, and conducted 512 cruelty investigations. Our Humane Enforcement Officers logged 91,399 miles last year responding to calls for stray animals, animals in distress and victims of suspected animal cruelty.

Maui Humane Society respectfully requests an allocation of an additional \$94,000 to account for inflationary pressures observed over the preceding two years. Additionally, we seek an appropriation of \$150,000 to fund the acquisition of an additional Humane Enforcement Officer position and an accompanying enforcement vehicle. This request is necessitated by a discernible escalation in demand for our services throughout the island. Contributing factors to this increased demand include the rising number of pet owners experiencing homelessness due to a lack of pet-friendly housing options, and a concurrent increase in animal abandonment cases. To illustrate the urgency of our request, on April 2, 2025, our officers intervened in a neglect case involving the seizure of seven canines from a single owner in Lahaina. All seven animals presented in an emaciated condition, with two requiring urgent medical attention, one of whom was subsequently euthanized due to the severity of its condition.

The community needs Maui Humane Society's help more than ever. Our MHS team will continue to meet these challenges, and we need the support of Maui County to continue serving those who need us most. Maui Humane Society respectfully requests an additional \$244,000 over and above the \$1,061,000 flat funding the Mayor has proposed for the second year in a row thereby resulting in a total MHS FY26 funding request of \$1,305,000. As mentioned above, this additional funding will account for inflationary increases over the last 2 years (\$94,000) and fund the acquisition of an additional Humane Enforcement Officer and enforcement vehicle (\$150,000).

Thank you again for your continued support in caring for all of Maui County's animals.

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