

Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, & Public Transportation Committee on 2025-02-20 9:00 AM

Meeting Time: 02-20-25 09:00

eComments Report

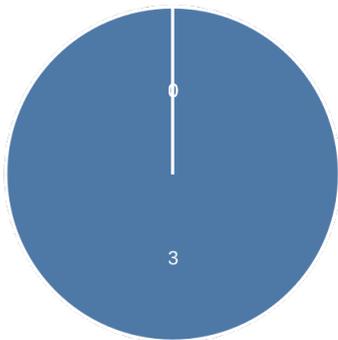
Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, & Public Transportation Committee on 2025-02-20 9:00 AM	02-20-25 09:00	6	3	3	0	0

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment

Support (100%) Oppose (0%) Neutral (0%)
No Response (0%)



Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, & Public Transportation Committee on 2025-02-20 9:00 AM

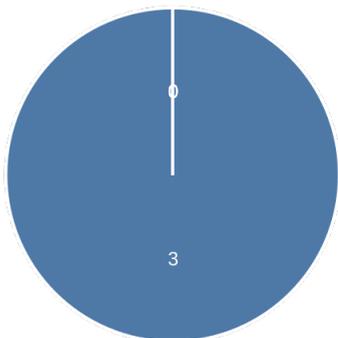
02-20-25 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Rule 7(B) ADEPT-1(3) OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	3	3	0	0

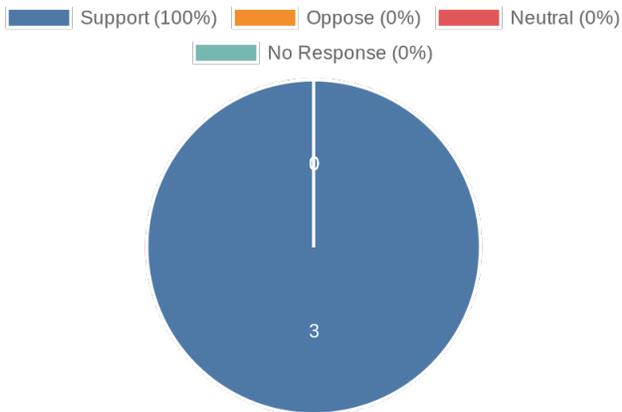
Sentiments for All Agenda Items

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Overall Sentiment



Lissa Strohecker

Location:

Submitted At: 7:52am 02-20-25

February 20, 2025

Maui County Council Committee on Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, and Public Transportation Thursday, February 20, 2025, 9:00 am Council Chambers

Aloha Chair Johnson, Vice-Chair Sinenci, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for your longstanding support for the work of the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) and Molokai Invasive Species Committee (MoMISC). The following points underscore why continued support from Maui County is vital to protecting the islands from invasive species.

Little fire ants: Since 2009, Maui has had 28 incursions of little fire ants—from K_pahulu to Napili, and Waihe_e to Kula, typically at a rate of one or two new infestations per year. We have had significant success with control: LFA are no longer detected at 15 of those sites. In the last 14 months, however, eight new infestations of little fire ants were discovered. This skyrocketing increase is alarming. We also are discovering expansions at some infested areas, most notably at locations with streams, as LFA is capable of spreading via waterways. MISC has responded by increasing staff capacity through direct hires and using a short-term contract team to address gaps. But it's not enough to keep up with the current pace of detection and spread. We need to double our capacity. The investment is worth it.

Coqui frogs: We are often asked why MISC hasn't eradicated coqui from Maui, despite significant funding over the years. The short answer is that achieving eradication would cost significantly more. In 2019, MISC conducted a comprehensive analysis, based on years of control data, to estimate costs of eradication over a 10-year timeframe. The estimate was over \$60 million. MISC has eradicated nearly 30 breeding populations across the island, prevented new populations from becoming established at hundreds of locations, including H_na, and supported community control efforts in ten different neighborhoods. Without these control efforts, coqui on Maui

would already be unstoppable. In other words, when we have the resources, we know how to be successful. Our current priorities include: staffing—our new Coqui Coordinator started in December and has been filling vacant positions as quickly as possible; supporting community programs with citric acid and spray equipment; and planning community workshops to engage more stakeholders in charting a sustainable path forward for a coqui-free Maui. Of note, there is the potential for additional state resources to support work on coqui in Maui County through HB 1237.

Invasive plants: Priority species on Maui include miconia and fire-promoting pampas grass, especially aerial control in more remote areas. The H_na crew normally focuses primarily on miconia; their efforts over the last year have also included work on little fire ants. The spread of pampas grass on West Maui is concerning, especially in some of the areas burned in 2022. A recent multi-partner meeting on pampas grass that included watershed partnerships, state agencies, and MISC demonstrated the value of leveraging resources from different agencies to address priorities and enhance efficiencies. MISC also has been working with the UH Hilo Spatial Data and Visualization Lab to create a snapshot of the miconia infestation in East Maui using remote sensing. That project should be completed this year and will help inform priority setting, especially for aerial control.

Early Detection— Rapid __hi_a Death and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles: The recent detection of rapid __hi_a death on Maui (only the second one on Maui) underscores the importance of public awareness and collaborative approaches. If this truly is an early detection, rapid response actions can help prevent irreparable damage to the forests of West Maui. MISC and MoMISC are conducting early detection surveys for coconut rhinoceros beetles in coordination with the Maui County Department of Agriculture and the University of Hawai_i CRB Response team.

Staffing: Collectively, MISC and MoMISC have 37 staff, with four new hires in the pipeline, plus a temporary team of five staff. A number of our staff came to MISC after losing positions due to the Lahaina fire. Some staff who will be joining us were recently terminated due to recent federal policies. MISC is reaching out to our partners in conservation to see how we can help lessen those impacts while also achieving our mandate. **Facility:** The projects work out of Molokai, H_na, and H_m_kuapoko / Old Maui High School. It is an honor and kuleana to once again be at OMHS. It also is challenging; we have no potable water; the extent of the electricity is limited; and security has its issues. We do not doubt that without a MISC presence on site, this historic site would suffer damages. We support all humane efforts by the County to address the Holomua situation.

MISC and MoMISC respectfully request continued support for their projects, at a minimum at FY2025 levels, but ideally with increased funding to address the identified challenges associated with little fire ants and coqui frogs.

Mahalo for your support.
Lissa Strohecker, Acting Manager
Maui Invasive Species Committee

Guest User

Location:
Submitted At: 12:38am 02-20-25

Cody Nemet Tuivait_
2/20/25

Environmental Protection & Sustainability Division

Aloha mai, 'O wau o Cody Nemet Tuivaiti, ua h_nai 'ia au ma Maui a noho wau i Kula Kai i ka ahupua'a o Keo kea. I am the project manager of hui o ' _inak_ ko'a, Po'o of the Aha Moku council i Kula Kai, and board member of Hui o M_lama Kakanilua. This is my testimony for the EP&S budget review.

As an organization that was denied funding by EP&S, I feel it is important that there are available funds for projects like ours to continue the important work we have established. I understand that it was a highly competitive year due to limited funds with many important projects seeking funding. Funding should be allocated to departments that are better equipped to handle specific projects. This way we can help to keep too many projects from applying for the same grant. Many of these projects are much broader than the project itself and in

many ways support each other, example being the mauka to makai connection. To deny one could be detrimental or stalling for another project. EP&S should deserve more funds to distribute grants in communication with other departments. With the fires, flooding, loss of vegetation and sediment issues, our projects deserve much more consideration.

Mahalo nui,
Cody Nemet Tuivaiti

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