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DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
<http://www.mauicounty.gov/water>

June 5, 2023

Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr.
Mayor, County of Maui
200 South High Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL

6-5-23
Mayor Date

For Transmittal to:

Honorable Nohelani U'u-Hodgins, Chair
Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee
Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Chair U'u-Hodgins:

SUBJECT: BILL 39 (2023), RELATING TO AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, STATE OF HAWAII, FOR THE LOW-INCOME HOME WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (GREAT-10)

In response to questions posed during GREAT Committee meeting of 5/22/2023, Department of Water Supply provides the following information:

1. What are the criteria for qualified applicants?

Response:

Eligibility and benefit determination criteria for LIHWAP varies with income, place of residence, household water burden, water system participation, and other factors. In general, the income threshold is 150% of poverty level, 60% state medium income, and eligibility for SNAP, SSI, and TANF.

"By Water All Things Find Life"

2. What is the number of Maui County users who could benefit from the program?

Response:

The LIHWAP provides one-time payments up to \$1,000 for water bills in arrears and up to \$1,000 for wastewater bills in arrears. Approximately 1,697 single family households are in arrears (with accounts aged 60 days or greater) based on the Water Services records. It is unknown how many of these households qualify for the LIHWAP but it is likely that many would.

According to the Hawaii Department of Human Services, applications are accepted monthly, but the number of approvals each month are limited and fill quickly.

The LIHWAP was established in December 2020. It is set to expire September 31, 2023. (The funds must be "liquidated" by December 2023.) If Maui chooses to participate, eligible applicants could apply in July, August, and September. We recommend that Maui County choose to participate for this reason, and also to be prepared if the program is extended or reinitiated in the future.

3. How many households are in arrears? What dates are users eligible for this grant? For example, if someone is in arrears from December 2020, can they qualify or is it only for people showing need or in arrears now?

Response:

According to Department of Water Services records, approximately 1,697 single family households are in arrears. The LIHWAP provides one-time payment for low-income households that are in arrears at the time of application. Applications are received each month and the money is distributed by the State until funds are exhausted for that month.

4. The funding seems like it's for support of up to \$1,000 "for each household." How is "household"? For example, if there is more than one structure on a property and each structure has a separate meter, is the \$1,000 for each meter for the entire property?

Response:

For the LIHWAP, a household is defined as "any individual or group of individuals who are living together as one unit for whom residential water and/or wastewater services are customarily purchased in common, or who make payments for those services in the form of rent."

5. Is it possible to get an extension on the grant deadline?

Response:

The LIHWAP is a federal program that is set to expire on September 30, 2023. Participation after that date will only be possible if the program is extended or reinitiated at the federal level.

6. How long would it take the Department of Water Supply, Department of Environmental Management, and MEO to get the program up and running?

Response:

The LIHWIP funds are issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. In Hawaii, the LIHWAP is administered by the Community Action Services Agency that serves each island. In Maui, that is the Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) office. The MEO also administers the sister program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). If the County chooses to participate in the LIHWAP, it is recommended that the County work with the MEO by providing the list of water customers who are in arrears and any other information they need to administer the program.

7. How does the Department plan to notify the public about the grant?

Response:

See answer to question 6. The Department would work with the MEO who administers the program. The administering agency (MEO) is responsible for conducting outreach activities for low-income, senior, and public housing to promote the program. (They should be already doing this for the LIHEAP.)

8. How much money would the County receive through this program?

Response:

The LIHWAP provides up to \$1,000 for water bills in arrears and up to \$1,000 for sewer bills in arrears. Approximately 1,697 single family households are in arrears based on the Water Services records. The average amount due for the 1,697 accounts was \$913. It is unknown how many of these households qualify for the LIHWAP but it is likely that many would.

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9. Who would qualify for assistance, only home-owners or home-owners, renters, etc.?

Response:

For the LIHWAP, a household is defined as “any individual or group of individuals who are living together as one unit for whom residential water and/or wastewater services are customarily purchased in common, or who make payments for those services in the form of rent.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information relating to this agenda item. If you have additional questions, please free to contact me.

Sincerely,



JOHN STUFFLEBEAN, P.E.
Director

JS:HK:lk

Great Committee

From: Michelle Santos <Michelle.Santos@co.maui.hi.us>
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 3:00 PM
To: Great Committee
Cc: Cynthia Sasada; James Landgraf; John Stufflebean; Josiah Nishita; Kekuhaupio Akana; Leo Caires; Linda Kimura; Pili Nahooikaika
Subject: MT#10220 Bill 39 Relating to Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into an intergovernmental Agreement with the Department of Human Services
Attachments: MT#10220-GREAT Committee.pdf

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT FORWARD MY EMAIL TO ANYONE OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI. YOU MAY CLICK ON THE ATTACHMENT ITSELF AND CREATE YOUR OWN EMAIL TO FORWARD THE DOCUMENT TO ANOTHER PERSON OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTY.

Michelle L. Santos

Office Operations Assistant

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