

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI

# WATER AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

October 25, 2024

**Committee  
Report No.** \_\_\_\_\_

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

Chair and Members:

Your Water and Infrastructure Committee, having met on October 10, 2024, makes reference to Resolution 24-161, entitled “URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO PRIORITIZE THE INCREASED PRODUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF RECYCLED R-1 WATER TO PRESERVE POTABLE WATER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING IN THE COUNTY OF MAUI.”

Resolution 24-161’s purpose is to urge the Administration to prioritize the increased production and expansion of the distribution of recycled R-1 water to preserve potable water for the construction of housing in the County.

Your Committee notes that the County has experienced increased drought conditions and reduced rainfall patterns, which has led to water shortage declarations and an increased concern in the amount of available potable water.

Your Committee further notes that without new water sources being developed or the preservation of potable water, construction of affordable housing in the County could continue to be delayed.

The Director of Environmental Management said R-1 water reuse has been a top priority for the Department. From 2010 to 2021, the Department expended \$47 million for R-1 water and reuse compared to \$69 million between 2022 and 2024.

The Director of Environmental Management added that the Department is focusing on R-1 water expansion in West Maui by acquiring

**COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**WATER AND INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**COMMITTEE**

Page 2

**Committee**  
**Report No. \_\_\_\_\_**

reservoirs for storage and extending distribution lines from the Lahaina Wastewater Reclamation Facility toward Wahikuli.

The Director of Water Supply said the Department is preparing to drill additional wells in West Maui to increase water source and has conducted a preliminary evaluation on desalination in the County. He said that offsetting potable water with R-1 water would in turn help to increase potable water for affordable housing. Thus, more wastewater could be treated into R-1 water and create a circular function to enhance sustainability.

The Director of Environmental Management noted that the Department plans to extend an R-1 water distribution line toward Kā'anapali, creating the potential to offset potable water and increase water source.

Your Committee expressed concern that potable water offset by R-1 water use may be controlled under private water purveyors and could instead be used to expand luxury homes.

The Director of Water Supply noted that the Department is in discussion with private water purveyors in West Maui to determine if the additional water can be made available to the County's water system.

By correspondence received October 4, 2024, your Committee Chair transmitted a proposed CD1 version of Resolution 24-161.

Your Committee supported the proposed CD1 version, which amends the following:

1. Clarifies that proper stewardship of water as a public-trust resource is essential to the protection and sustainability of the County's water supply.

**COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**WATER AND INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**COMMITTEE**

Page 3

**Committee**  
**Report No. \_\_\_\_\_**

2. Encourages the Administration to seek input from community members to examine opportunities for increasing R-1 water production and strengthening R-1 water infrastructure for South, West, and Central Maui.
3. Incorporates nonsubstantive revisions.

Your Committee further amended Resolution 24-161 to clarify that preserved potable water is to be used for the construction of affordable housing, and will be used to support fire protection, greenbelts, agriculture, and cultural uses in the County.

Additionally, your Committee amended Resolution 24-161 to encourage the Administration and Department of Environmental Management to ensure that the County has control over potable water that is offset by R-1 water use.

The Managing Director, Director of Water Supply, and Director of Environmental Management expressed support for Resolution 24-161, CD1.

Your Committee believes increasing R-1 water use is a viable solution to offset the demand on the County's vital and finite water supply.

Your Committee voted 7-1 to recommend adoption of Resolution 24-161, CD1. Committee Chair Cook, Vice-Chair Sugimura, and members Kama, Lee, Paltin, Sinenci, and U'u-Hodgins voted "aye." Committee member Rawlins-Fernandez voted "no." Committee member Johnson was excused.

Your Committee is in receipt of Resolution 24-161, CD1, entitled "URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO PRIORITIZE THE INCREASED PRODUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF RECYCLED R-1 WATER TO PRESERVE POTABLE WATER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND TO SUPPORT FIRE PROTECTION,

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI  
**WATER AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
COMMITTEE**

Page 4

**Committee  
Report No.** \_\_\_\_\_

GREENBELTS, AGRICULTURE, AND CULTURAL USES IN THE COUNTY OF MAUI,” incorporating your Committee’s recommended revisions and nonsubstantive revisions.

Your Water and Infrastructure Committee RECOMMENDS that Resolution 24-161, CD1, as revised herein and attached hereto, entitled “URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO PRIORITIZE THE INCREASED PRODUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF RECYCLED R-1 WATER TO PRESERVE POTABLE WATER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND TO SUPPORT FIRE PROTECTION, GREENBELTS, AGRICULTURE, AND CULTURAL USES IN THE COUNTY OF MAUI,” be ADOPTED.

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



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TOM COOK, Chair

# Resolution

**No. 24-161, CD1**

URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO PRIORITIZE  
THE INCREASED PRODUCTION AND  
EXPANSION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF  
RECYCLED R-1 WATER TO PRESERVE  
POTABLE WATER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND TO SUPPORT  
FIRE PROTECTION, GREENBELTS,  
AGRICULTURE, AND CULTURAL USES IN THE  
COUNTY OF MAUI

WHEREAS, proper stewardship of water as a public trust resource is essential to ensure the health and sustainability of the County's water supply; and

WHEREAS, the island of Maui faces chronic potable water shortages, delaying the construction of hundreds of affordable-housing units in West and South Maui, exacerbating the County's housing crisis; and

WHEREAS, the reliable capacity of the County's water system in West Maui is 4.12 million gallons per day, but the demand prior to the August 2023 wildfires was 5.6 million gallons per day; and

WHEREAS, as of March 2024, post-fire water usage in West Maui is 3.59 million gallons per day, yet the Department of Water Supply is responsible for providing water at the pre-fire demand level of 5.6 million gallons per day; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Water Supply estimates that the County's pre-fire usage per person in West Maui was about 228 gallons per day, per person; and

WHEREAS, by adding one million gallons of potable water per day to the County's water system, the Department would be able to support the construction of affordable housing for approximately 4,587 people in West Maui; and

## **Resolution No. 24-161, CD1**

WHEREAS, the Department anticipates all existing potable water sources will be allocated for the reconstruction of residential and commercial structures in the West Maui burn zone and the construction of temporary housing through 2027; and

WHEREAS, the Department plans on developing 3.4 million gallons per day of potable water sources in West Maui, but it will take approximately one to four years before any new potable water source is available; and

WHEREAS, use of R-1 water for irrigation, particularly for high-quantity landscaping or agricultural demands, including parks, golf courses, hotels, and condominium properties in West and South Maui, could help to offset the existing use of potable water for nonpotable purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Lahaina Wastewater Reclamation Facility, the County's only wastewater treatment facility in West Maui, produced 4.5 million gallons per day of R-1 water, while disposing an average of 3.16 million gallons per day of treated wastewater through injection wells, according to pre-fire calculations; and

WHEREAS, South Maui, an area also lacking potable water, could benefit from using R-1 water from the Kihei Wastewater Reclamation Facility for landscaping, agricultural, and irrigation purposes instead of potable water; and

WHEREAS, a portion of treated wastewater effluent from County wastewater reclamation facilities are disposed of through the use of injection wells; and

WHEREAS, in addition to costing less than potable water, the use of R-1 water would reduce the need for fertilizer because of its nutrient content, resulting in long-term savings for all users; and

## **Resolution No. 24-161, CD1**

WHEREAS, the public has expressed an interest in expanding the use of R-1 water, as illustrated by:

- the Countywide Policy Plan, to: “Promote the reclamation of gray water, and enable the use of reclaimed, gray, and brackish water for activities that do not require potable water”;
- the Maui Island Plan, to: “Maximize the efficient use of reclaimed wastewater to serve nonpotable needs”;
- the Kīhei-Mākena Community Plan, to: “Reduce the reliance on injection wells for wastewater disposal. Require the use of reclaimed effluent – a procedure which is safe, economical and environmentally sound – for irrigation of golf courses, parks and landscaped areas”; and
- the West Maui Community Plan, to: “Identify and encourage potential new users of recycled water, including parks, golf courses, and agriculture, and expand recycled water storage and conveyance systems in West Maui to increase the reuse of recycled water”; and

WHEREAS, additional infrastructure is necessary to enable the production and additional distribution of R-1 water to reduce the County’s reliance on injection wells and achieve meaningful results in building affordable housing for County residents; now, therefore,

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

1. That it urges the Administration to prioritize the increased production and expansion of the distribution of recycled R-1 water to preserve potable water for the construction of affordable housing, and to support fire protection, greenbelts, agriculture, and cultural uses in the County of Maui;
2. That it encourages the Administration to seek input from community members to examine opportunities for increasing R-1 water production and strengthening R-1 water infrastructure for West, South, and Central Maui;

## **Resolution No. 24-161, CD1**

3. That it encourages the Mayor and Director of Environmental Management to invest in R-1 water production at the Kahului, Molokai, and Lānaʻi Wastewater Treatment Facilities, along with the expansion of the R-1 distribution system in West and South Maui, and explore public-private partnerships to expand the distribution network for R-1 water in West and South Maui to allow the County control over potable water that is offset by R-1 water usage;
4. That it encourages the Director of Environmental Management to provide the Council with an annual report on the progress made and investments necessary to expand R-1 water production and distribution; and
5. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, Managing Director, Director of Environmental Management, and Director of Water Supply.



INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cook".

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TOM COOK