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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
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September 4, 2020

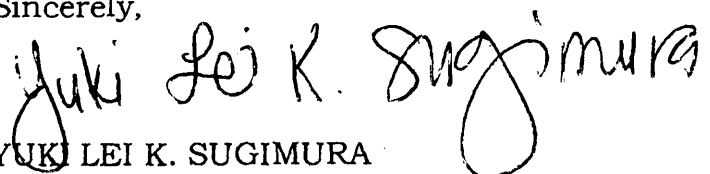
The Honorable Alice L. Lee
Council Chair
County of Maui
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Chair Lee:

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE FREE PRESS AND
THE RIGHTS OF MAUI COUNTY WORKERS
EMPLOYED AT THE LOCAL DAILY NEWSPAPER**
(PAF-20-252)

May I request the attached proposed resolution, entitled "SUPPORTING THE VITAL ROLE OF THE FREE PRESS AND THE RIGHTS OF MAUI COUNTY WORKERS EMPLOYED AT THE LOCAL DAILY NEWSPAPER," be placed on the next Council meeting agenda.

Sincerely,


YUKI LEI K. SUGIMURA
Councilmember

paf:dmr:20-252b

Enclosure

COUNTY COMMUNICATION NO. 20-447

Resolution

No. _____

SUPPORTING THE VITAL ROLE OF THE FREE PRESS AND THE RIGHTS OF MAUI COUNTY WORKERS EMPLOYED AT THE LOCAL DAILY NEWSPAPER

WHEREAS, democracy depends on the free press to promote the open exchange of ideas, promote debate and critical reflection, question authority, remember history and the stories of communities, and to seek, discover, analyze, and share information that affects residents' lives and well-being; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States said, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press"; and

WHEREAS, Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States, declared August 4, 1985, as "Freedom of the Press Day," noting that the free press was one of America's oldest and most important institutions; and

WHEREAS, the website of The Pulitzer Prizes states that "professional local journalism" is "an essential force in our democracy"; and

WHEREAS, in a report on November 12, 2019, calling for broad support for local newspapers, The Brookings Institution stated, "The need for local journalism has not changed over time"; and

WHEREAS, with the evolution of technology, consolidation of media outlets, and increased use of freelance agents, many members of the press—particularly in print media—have recently experienced unstable working conditions and uncertain futures; and

WHEREAS, print journalists, such as writers and editors, and other newspaper staff are workers, with rights to reasonable pay, benefits, hours, job security, and to declare and investigate grievances; and

WHEREAS, the free press as a vital institution cannot exist without the people who provide the news; and

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, members of the Pacific Media Workers Guild (The NewsGuild—Communications Workers of America Local 39521) who work at the only daily newspaper based in Maui County are bargaining for their next contract; and

WHEREAS, employees of *The Maui News* have been met with troubling demands from the corporation that owns the newspaper; and

WHEREAS, for instance, West Virginia-based Ogden Newspapers, Inc. is seeking to have Mainland workers edit stories and design the pages of the newspaper relied on by Maui, Molokai, and Lanai residents for daily local news; and

WHEREAS, outsourcing of this work would likely lead to inaccuracies and cultural insensitivity in coverage and would be unfair to workers based in Maui County; and

WHEREAS, Ogden Newspapers, Inc. also seeks to outsource advertising work, which would impede the ability of local workers to collaborate with Maui County businesses for a source of revenue that keeps the paper operational; and

WHEREAS, the strength of the free press and the rights of newspaper workers in Maui County are imperiled; now, therefore,

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

1. That it supports the vital role of the free press in Maui County;
2. That it supports the rights of Maui County workers employed at the only local daily newspaper; and
3. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Bart Leath, Interim Publisher, *The Maui News*; Lee Imada, Managing Editor, *The Maui News*, Michael Applegate, Executive Officer; Pacific Media Workers Guild; Margo Brenes; Hawaii Units Support Staff, Pacific Media Workers Guild; Wendy Isbell, Bargaining Unit Chair, Pacific Media Workers Guild; the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor, State of Hawaii; and the Honorable Michael P. Victorino, Mayor, County of Maui.