
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE COUNTY OF MAUI TO ADOPT A FINANCIALLY PRUDENT BUDGET
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 THAT MAINTAINS CURRENT
OPERATIONAL LEVELS EXCEPT FOR CERTAIN MANDATORY OR CRITICAL
INCREASES.

1 WHEREAS, the August 2023 wildfires on the island of Maui
2 destroyed the core of historic Front Street in Lahaina, Maui,
3 and many surrounding neighborhoods, killing over a hundred
4 people, destroying thousands of residential and commercial
5 structures, and displacing thousands of residents; and
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7 WHEREAS, the August 2023 wildfires also destroyed dozens of
8 structures and displaced dozens of families in Upcountry Maui;
9 and
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11 WHEREAS, the cost to respond to and recover from this
12 tragedy at the federal, state, and county levels is estimated to
13 be in the billions of dollars over multiple years; and
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15 WHEREAS, in addition to response and recovery costs, the
16 State and County of Maui also stand to lose significant revenue
17 from general excise taxes, transient accommodations taxes, and
18 real property taxes because of a decrease in visitors to the
19 island of Maui due to occupancy of hotel rooms by displaced
20 families, loss of property use and value, and waivers to
21 incentivize long-term rentals over short-term rentals; and
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23 WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget currently being
24 deliberated on by this body is likely to include hundreds of
25 millions of dollars for the County of Maui for various aspects
26 of recovery; and
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1 WHEREAS, fiscal restraint will be needed in other areas of
2 state operations to offset recovery funds for the County of
3 Maui; and
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5 WHEREAS, Maui County Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr.,
6 presented his proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 to the
7 Maui County Council on March 25, 2024; and
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9 WHEREAS, according to the Mayor's press release, the
10 proposed budget reflects an increase of \$429,200,000 over the
11 prior fiscal year, a 33.9 percent increase, while at the same
12 time expecting \$150,000,000 from the State; and
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14 WHEREAS, the proposed budget also includes funding needed
15 to support new departments and agencies, specifically a new
16 Department of 'Oiwi Resources, a new water authority to be known
17 as the East Maui Regional Community Board, and a new Department
18 of Housing arising out of the splitting of the existing
19 Department of Housing and Human Concerns, which were mandated by
20 amendments made to the Maui County Charter in 2022; and
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22 WHEREAS, the proposed budget also includes funding needed
23 to implement recommendations from wildfire after-action reports;
24 and
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26 WHEREAS, the County of Maui additionally faces unknown
27 costs to defend itself in numerous lawsuits relating to the
28 wildfires; and
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30 WHEREAS, other than these necessary spending increases and
31 those needed to continue recovery efforts, the fiscal year 2024-
32 2025 budget for the County of Maui should be conservative and
33 not increase personnel and operating expenses that will continue
34 to be supported in future years; and
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36 WHEREAS, the County of Maui has experienced staffing
37 shortages for years and has struggled to improve high vacancy
38 rates, suggesting that it may be premature to increase the
39 County's budget for additional positions when current vacancies
40 cannot be filled; and
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1 WHEREAS, the Maui County Council begins its deliberations
2 on the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget on April 1, 2024, and has
3 scheduled a second and final reading for the budget ordinances
4 for June 5, 2024; now, therefore,
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6 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
7 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
8 Session of 2024, the Senate concurring, that the County of Maui
9 is urged to adopt a financially prudent budget for fiscal year
10 2024-2025; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Maui County Council is
13 urged to adopt, and Mayor Bissen is urged to sign, a fiscal year
14 2025-2026 budget that maintains current operational levels, such
15 as staffing, except for increases mandated by the Maui County
16 Charter or those critical to wildfire response; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Mayor of
20 the County of Maui, and members of the Maui County Council.

