

MAR 07 2025

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE COUNTY OF MAUI TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF
IMPLEMENTING A UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTS
AND BUSINESS OWNERS IMPACTED BY THE 2023 MAUI WILDFIRES.

1 WHEREAS, the 2023 Maui wildfires caused extensive damage to
2 homes, businesses, and infrastructure, the effects of which
3 continue to displace thousands of residents and disrupt the
4 local economy two years later; and

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6 WHEREAS, evidence from past wildfire recovery efforts,
7 including the My People Fund initiative in Tennessee following
8 the 2016 Gatlinburg wildfires, demonstrate that direct financial
9 assistance to those impacted contributes significantly to
10 economic stability, reduces financial strain, and improves long-
11 term recovery outcomes; and

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13 WHEREAS, by giving checks directly to impacted families at
14 regular intervals over the course of six months, the My People
15 Fund initiative essentially acted as a universal basic income
16 (UBI), which is a social welfare program that provides a regular
17 cash payment to all citizens of a given population without work
18 requirements or regard to their income and wealth; and

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20 WHEREAS, the checks led to positive impacts on housing
21 security, financial well-being, and emotional health, as
22 highlighted in the program's evaluation; and

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24 WHEREAS, research indicates that direct cash assistance
25 programs empower recipients by affording them the flexibility to
26 address their most pressing needs, including housing, medical
27 expenses, childcare, and business recovery; and

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29 WHEREAS, the projected long-term economic effects of the
30 2023 Maui wildfires on the county, including increased housing
31 instability, loss of employment, and declining tourism revenue,



1 warrant proactive measures to support affected residents and
2 businesses; and

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4 WHEREAS, implementing a UBI program in the County of Maui,
5 modeled after previous successful direct assistance programs,
6 would establish a financial safety net and foster economic
7 resilience during the extended recovery process; and

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9 WHEREAS, given the ongoing public support as the recovery
10 period continues, the County of Maui is uniquely positioned to
11 explore funding mechanisms for a UBI program, including federal
12 disaster aid, state grants, public-private partnerships, and
13 philanthropic contributions; now, therefore,

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15 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
16 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025, the
17 House of Representatives concurring, that the County of Maui is
18 requested to study the feasibility of implementing a Universal
19 Basic Income Program for residents and business owners impacted
20 by the 2023 Maui wildfires; and

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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Maui is requested
23 to consider in the study factors including eligibility criteria,
24 funding sources, economic impact, and potential partnerships
25 with nonprofit organizations and research institutions; and

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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Maui is requested
28 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
29 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
30 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
31 of 2026; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
34 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director
35 of Human Services, Mayor of the County of Maui, and Chair of
36 Maui County Council.

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39 OFFERED BY: 

