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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE COUNTY OF MAUI TO ADOPT A FINANCIALLY PRUDENT BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 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 2025-2026 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 2025-2026 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 2025-  
32 2026 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 2025-2026 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 2025-2026; 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.

