
HOUSE RESOLUTION

FIRE AND FLOOD MITIGATION IN SOUTH MAUI

- 1 WHEREAS, South Maui has been hit by five major floods causing significant damage and two
2 once in century floods in the last 3 years in part due to the degradation of Kīhei’s historical
3 wetlands; and
- 4 WHEREAS, these floods put citizens’ lives directly at stake by closing roads and access to and
5 by emergency medical personnel and aid; and
- 6 WHEREAS these floods put emergency responders’ lives directly at stake, leading to tragedies
7 including the death of Maui County firefighter Tre’ Evans-Dumaran (2023), whilst responding to
8 flooding emergencies; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Kīhei is a critical revenue generating source that needs protection; and
- 10 WHEREAS, greening efforts to reduce flooding are effective at making greenbelts for fire
11 mitigation; and
- 12 WHEREAS, wildfires and flooding can both be prevented by greening the area surrounding
13 Kīhei, reducing plant destruction by deer and providing recycled R1 water to grow mosses and
14 plants that prevent erosion and act as firebreaks; and
- 15 WHEREAS, these measures in conjunction with retention ponds can reduce flooding and
16 wildfire risk, effectively saving lives, property, and generating revenue; and
- 17 WHEREAS, Hawai‘i’s surface water quality standards apply to wetlands: (i) Hawai‘i’s Water
18 Code Chapter 174C-3 defines “water” or “waters of the State” as “any and all water on or
19 beneath the surface of the ground, including natural or artificial watercourses, lakes, ponds, or
20 diffused surface water and water percolating, standing, or flowing beneath the surface of the
21 ground;” (ii) the Hawai‘i Water Code Chapter 174C-3 explicitly protects wetlands as part of
22 stream systems; (iii) it is the Policy of the County of Maui Chapter 19.47.020 that wetlands be



1 restored or protected beyond what is required by the Clean Water Act, Coastal Zone
2 Management Act, or any other law, and all discretionary permits issued by the County must be
3 consistent with this policy; and
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5 WHEREAS, anchialine pools have unique and often rare ecosystems and species, several of
6 which are in South Maui; and
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8 WHEREAS, without protections, anchialine pools and other wetlands may be at risk for
9 development or degraded habitat, and it is financially prudent to protect and prevent degraded
10 wetlands because, due to the State's stringent land use laws, it is incredibly difficult and cost-
11 prohibitive to maintain or restore degraded wetlands; and
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13 WHEREAS, the boundaries of wetlands are determined by the presence of two or more of the
14 three wetland indicators ((i) hydrophytic vegetation, (ii) the presence of hydric soils, and (iii)
15 evidence of hydrology) listed in the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation
16 Manual and the 2012 Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation
17 Manual: Hawai'i and Pacific Islands Region; and
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19 WHEREAS, much of Kīhei has all three above wetland indicators; and
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21 WHEREAS, Kīhei's wetlands directly receive stream, storm, and urban runoff, and these
22 wetlands act as a necessary filter before this water reaches the ocean, without such filtering high
23 levels of sediments damage coral reefs, aquatic life, and recreational usage; and
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25 WHEREAS, restoration and net gain of wetlands enhances wildfire and drought resilience,
26 reduces the magnitude of flooding events, and provides valuable habitat for a variety of flora and
27 fauna, all of which are of vital importance to Maui; and
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29 WHEREAS, fire and flooding in Maui is further exacerbated by the invasive axis deer
30 population over-grazing native plants; and
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32 WHEREAS, compared to native plants, invasive forest plants tend to be more fire-prone, do not
33 absorb as much water, and are less likely to latch onto the soil, causing higher flooding and fire
34 risk; and
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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives that there should be created a Hawai'i State
37 Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Agricultural Resources policy calling for
38 a net gain in wetlands; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there should be created a Hawai'i State policy calling for
2 Department of Land and Natural Resources protection and/or restoration of anchialine pools;
3 and

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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there should be substantive funding to mitigate fire and
6 flood risk in South Maui; and

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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Kīhei wetlands shall be prioritized over development
9 concerns where feasible; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funds shall be prioritized for purchasing land parcels solely
12 for restoration and habitat protection purposes; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the replanting of native plants that are vital to preventing
15 flooding and fire disasters shall be prioritized on Maui, and shall be done so in areas and ways so
16 that they are protected from imminent destruction by axis deer and other hazards, particularly
17 around streambanks and wetland banks to prevent erosion and purify water; and

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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that further measures shall be taken to control the invasive axis
20 deer population in Maui, including furthering current fencing and ungulate control efforts and
21 hunting incentives; and

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23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that to further axis deer hunting incentives and to better feed
24 Maui and all of Hawai'i, the County of Maui, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural
25 Resources, Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, and the State of Hawai'i shall engage in
26 proactive efforts to make U.S. Department of Agriculture inspections and U.S. Department of
27 Agriculture butchers more accessible, feasible, and affordable for hunters to utilize in order to
28 sell venison; and

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these efforts by the Count of Maui, Hawai'i Department of
31 Land and Natural Resources, Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, and the State of Hawai'i shall
32 aim to model other state programs that process meat and distribute it to the community (for
33 example, in Pennsylvania's Hunters Sharing the Harvest program, hunters bring a kill to any one
34 of a network of deer processors who then put venison into the food bank system – this program
35 donates over 100k lbs. of venison to over 5k food banks); and

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the lands available for hunting axis deer on Maui should be
37 expanded where possible – private owners should continue to be incentivized to allow axis deer
38 hunts on private lands through programs such as the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural



1 Resources Landowner Incentive Program, and fiscal support for such programs shall be
2 prioritized; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mesonet and CWRM hydrologic data services are of utmost
5 importance to track, understand, and predict fires and flooding on Maui and throughout Hawai'i,
6 and should continue to be funded and supported so disastrous events can be anticipated,
7 mitigated, and/or planned for when unavoidable.

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to :
10 Governor Josh Green, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources Chairperson Dawn
11 Chang, Hawai'i Department of Health Director Kenneth Fink, Hawai'i Department of
12 Agriculture Chairperson Sharon Hurd, County of Maui Mayor Richard Bissen, County of Maui
13 Department of Public Works Director Jordan Molina, County of Maui Council Chair Alice Lee,
14 County of Maui Vice Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura, County of Maui Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
15 Tasha Kama, and County of Maui Councilmembers Tom Cook, Gabe Johnson, Tamara Paltin,
16 Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Shane Sinenci, and Nohelani U'u-Hodgins.

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OFFERED BY:



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