

MAR 07 2025

SENATE 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,
32 warrant proactive measures to support affected residents and
33 businesses; and
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1 WHEREAS, implementing a UBI program in the County of Maui,
 2 modeled after previous successful direct assistance programs,
 3 would establish a financial safety net and foster economic
 4 resilience during the extended recovery process; and
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6 WHEREAS, given the ongoing public support as the recovery
 7 period continues, the County of Maui is uniquely positioned to
 8 explore funding mechanisms for a UBI program, including federal
 9 disaster aid, state grants, public-private partnerships, and
 10 philanthropic contributions; now, therefore,
 11

12 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
 13 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
 14 that the County of Maui is requested to study the feasibility of
 15 implementing a Universal Basic Income Program for residents and
 16 business owners impacted by the 2023 Maui wildfires; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Maui is requested
 19 to consider in the study factors including eligibility criteria,
 20 funding sources, economic impact, and potential partnerships
 21 with nonprofit organizations and research institutions; and
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23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Maui is requested
 24 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
 25 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
 26 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
 27 of 2026; and
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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 30 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Human
 31 Services, Mayor of the County of Maui, and Chair of Maui County
 32 Council.
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 34
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OFFERED BY: _____

