

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

March 20, 2009

Committee

Report No. 09-26

Honorable Chair and Members
of the County Council
County of Maui
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Chair and Members:

Your Economic Development, Agriculture, and Recreation Committee, having met on February 19, 2009 and March 5, 2009, makes reference to County Communication No. 09-31, from Councilmember Jo Anne Johnson, relating to the economic stabilization of Maui County.

A panel consisting of the Economic Development Coordinator, Office of the Mayor; the Director of Public Works; Jacqueline Haraguchi, Executive Director, Maui Contractors Association; Carole Kooy, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Maui Chamber of Commerce; Susie Thieman, CEO, Business Development Corporation, Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.; Terry Vencel, Executive Director, Maui Visitors Bureau; Stephen West, Division Representative, International Longshore and Warehouse Union; and a second panel consisting of Jeanne Unemori Skog, President & CEO, Maui Economic Development Board, Inc.; Warren Watanabe, Executive Director, Maui County Farm Bureau; Jocelyn Perreira, Executive Director, Wailuku Main Street Association, Inc./Tri-Isle Main Street Resource Center; and Nancy Johnson, Allied Health Coordinator, Maui Community College provided an overview of how the current economic downturn has affected the community. Panelists provided recommendations for stabilizing the local economy.

Ms. Thieman stated that the current economic downturn provides opportunities for small businesses to position themselves to take advantage of the eventual economic recovery. County grant funding has allowed the Business Development Corporation to provide loans to individuals to start small businesses in these tough economic times.

Ms. Kooy and Ms. Haraguchi expressed their concerns about the delays in building permit approvals and their effect on time-sensitive projects to be funded by the Federal government through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The Director of Public Works provided a breakdown of Hawaii's estimated allocation from ARRA by various programs, from Congresswoman Mazie Hirono. The

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Director stated that most of the “shovel ready” projects to be funded by the ARRA would be projects that currently have building permits or do not require building permits. He said that several State agencies, such as the Department of Education, have the ability to exempt their capital improvement projects from County building requirements.

Your Committee voted 4-0 to recommend filing of the communication. Committee Chair Johnson, Vice-Chair Kaho`ohalahala, and members Baisa and Pontanilla voted “aye”. Committee member Molina was excused.

Your Economic Development, Agriculture, and Recreation Committee **RECOMMENDS** that County Communication No. 09-31 be FILED.

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Adoption of this report is respectfully requested.



JO ANNE JOHNSON, Chair

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