

# Resolution

No. \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF MAUI COUNTY'S WATERSHEDS

WHEREAS, the islands of Maui Nui once supported a vibrant, healthy Hawaiian community which benefitted from a balanced relationship with nature, providing for all their water, food, and material culture needs. This was an *`āina momona* ("land of abundance") managed for plentiful resources and held in trust for future generations; and

WHEREAS, these early Hawaiians had a profound understanding of the relationship between ocean and land-based resources, which included observance of a *kapu* system and self-regulation to avoid overharvesting and permanently depleting their resources; and

WHEREAS, Hawaiians had a deep understanding and respect for their natural capital, especially water resources, evident in their word for wealth - *waiwai*, derived from the word for fresh water - *wai*; and

WHEREAS, today there is a critical need for greater awareness in understanding the relationship between the abundance and sustainability of fresh, clean water and healthy native forests, both vital for nurturing and sustaining Hawaiian cultural practices and traditions; and

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WHEREAS, though the upland forests of Maui Nui have been severely reduced, our human population continues to grow and yet we remain completely dependent on remaining tracts of forested watersheds for all our water needs, and that care for these forests is a wise and forward-thinking investment for all future human generations; and

WHEREAS, Maui County has taken a proactive leadership role in coordinating watershed management; and

WHEREAS, forested watersheds provide valuable ecosystem services and economists have estimated the aquifer recharge value of a large Hawaiian forest in the billions of dollars; and

WHEREAS, invasive plant species threaten the integrity of our forested watersheds, and degraded forests could reduce Maui's water recharge by approximately four million gallons per day, with estimated annual impacts of over \$70,000,000; and

WHEREAS, recent research demonstrated that during dry periods, the invasive tree species strawberry guava removes fifty-three per cent more water from the soil than the native `ōhi`a trees, thereby reducing stream and aquifer recharge; and

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WHEREAS, feral animals root, trample and destroy native vegetation, accelerating erosion, spreading weeds, and polluting the water supply with eroded silt, feces, and foreign diseases; and

WHEREAS, a single wildfire can destroy thousands of acres of centuries-old watershed forests in a single day; and

WHEREAS, active management is needed to maintain a healthy native watershed to sustain the future quality and quantity of Maui County's water supply; and

WHEREAS, active management of these watersheds will significantly benefit Hawai'i's numerous plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world and known worldwide as extraordinary examples of speciation and adaptation; and

WHEREAS, the water and watersheds of Maui County are vital to our residents, visitors, and agricultural industry; and

WHEREAS, Maui County will continue to reap significant economic advantages if the management of these threats is addressed early and shared among stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, many of the threats to the forested watershed, such as feral ungulates, fire, insects, diseases, and invasive non-native plants, occur across land ownership boundaries, and

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effective management is best achieved through the coordinated actions of all stakeholders supported by an informed public; and

WHEREAS, in recognizing these facts, it is up to today's generation to create a vision of sustainability and a renewed commitment to the concept of *`āina momona*, integral to this being an understanding of the importance of Maui County's watershed forest; and

WHEREAS, there are five watershed partnerships in Maui County, namely, East Maui Watershed Partnership, East Moloka`i Watershed Partnership, Lānai Forest and Watershed Partnership, Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Restoration Partnership, and West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership, and whose partnership agreements are attached as Exhibits "1", "2", "3", "4", and "5", respectively; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it recognizes the importance of protecting and managing Maui County's watersheds, native forests, and water resources for cultural, biological and economic benefits they yield to Maui County;


2. That it supports increased funding for watershed protection, management, and education;

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3. That it supports the implementation of management plans developed by East Maui Watershed Partnership, East Moloka`i Watershed Partnership, Lānai Forest and Watershed Partnership, Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Restoration Partnership, and West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership; and

4. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the County of Maui, East Maui Watershed Partnership, East Moloka`i Watershed Partnership, Hawai`i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Lānai Forest and Watershed Partnership, Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Restoration Partnership, University of Hawai`i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, U.S. Forest Service Southwest Research Station, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership.

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND LEGALITY:



EDWARD S. KUSHI, JR.  
Deputy Corporation Counsel  
County of Maui