

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
PLANNING COMMITTEE

November 6, 2009

Committee
Report No. _____

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

Chair and Members:

Your Planning Committee, having met on October 12, 2009, makes reference to County Communication No. 09-144, from the Mayor, transmitting a proposed resolution, entitled "SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF MAUI COUNTY'S WATERSHEDS".

The purpose of the proposed resolution is to recognize the importance of protecting and managing watersheds, native forests, and water resources in the County of Maui; support the implementation of watershed management plans developed by the East Maui Watershed Partnership, West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership, Leeward Haleakala Watershed and Restoration Partnership, East Molokai Watershed Partnership, and Lanai Forest and Watershed Partnership; and support increased funding for watershed protection, management, and education. Your Committee notes that a watershed is commonly defined as a region draining into a river, river system, or other body of water.

At its meeting, your Committee received a revised proposed resolution from the Mayor's Office. The revised proposed resolution incorporates revisions to reflect Native Hawaiian practices relating to watershed protection and management, which emphasized respect for natural resources, thereby preventing resource depletion.

Your Committee received information on the historical, current, and expected future condition of Maui County's watersheds from the County's Environmental Coordinator; from Mark White, Ph.D., of The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii; and from Arthur Medeiros, Ph.D., of the United States Geological Survey. Dr. Medeiros gave a computer-generated presentation exhibiting how increased population, climate change, and invasive species all are stressing Maui County's watersheds. He explained why funding is needed to protect the watersheds. He advised that "every square inch of Maui County watersheds is one of our community's greatest resources". The Environmental Coordinator and Drs. White and Medeiros told your Committee that substantial public commitment to the

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
PLANNING COMMITTEE

November 6, 2009
Page 2

Committee
Report No. _____

effective management of Maui County's watersheds is needed for long-term environmental sustainability. Without the investment of public resources, they said, Maui County's ecology and economy will be devastated.

Your Committee expressed serious concern regarding the current and projected future stresses on Maui County's watersheds, stated its support for the work of community partnerships on the development of watershed-management plans, and endorsed the view that continued funding for watershed protection and management is advisable. Your Committee voted to incorporate further revisions to the revised proposed resolution consistent with these positions.

Your Committee voted 5-0 to recommend adoption of the revised proposed resolution and filing of the communication. Committee Chair Kaho'ohalahala, Vice-Chair Johnson, and members Baisa, Molina, and Nishiki voted "aye". Committee members Medeiros and Victorino were excused.

Your Committee is in receipt of a revised proposed resolution, incorporating your Committee's recommended revisions.

Your Planning Committee RECOMMENDS the following:

1. That Resolution No. _____, as revised herein and attached hereto, entitled "SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF MAUI COUNTY'S WATERSHEDS", be ADOPTED; and
2. That County Communication No. 09-144 be FILED.

This report is submitted in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of the Council.



SOL. P. KAHO'OHALAHALA, Chair

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 that benefited from a balanced relationship with nature; and

WHEREAS, as an `āina momona (land of abundance), Maui Nui provided for all residents' water, food, and material cultural needs and was managed to ensure plentiful resources and held in trust for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the 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, which was 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

WHEREAS, though the upland forests of Maui Nui have been severely reduced and human population continues to grow, Maui County remains completely dependent on remaining tracts of forested watersheds for all its water needs, and 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

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, invasive plant species threaten the integrity of forested watersheds, and degraded forests could reduce Maui's water recharge by approximately 4 million gallons per day, with estimated annual impacts of more than \$70 million; and

WHEREAS, recent research demonstrated that during dry periods, the invasive tree species strawberry guava removes 53 percent more water from the soil than native ohia trees, thereby reducing stream and aquifer recharge; and

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 healthy native watersheds to sustain the future quality and quantity of Maui County's water supply; and

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

WHEREAS, the water and watersheds of Maui County are vital to residents, visitors, and the 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 watersheds—such as feral ungulates, fire, insects, diseases, and invasive non-native plants—occur across land-ownership boundaries, and effective management is best achieved through the coordinated actions of all stakeholders supported by an informed public; and

WHEREAS, it is up to today's generation to recreate 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 forests; now, therefore,

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

1. That it hereby 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;

Resolution No. _____

2. That it supports continued funding for watershed protection, management, and education;
3. That it supports the implementation of the watershed-management plans developed by the East Maui Watershed Partnership, the East Moloka'i Watershed Partnership, the Lāna'i Forest and Watershed Partnership, the Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Restoration Partnership, and the West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership (attached to County Communication No. 09-144 and on file with the Office of the County Clerk); and
4. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Charmaine Tavares, Mayor, County of Maui; the Honorable Laura Thielen, Chairperson, Board of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i; Dr. Andrew Hashimoto, Dean and Director, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa; Dr. Deanna J. Stouder, Station Director, Pacific Southwest Research Station, United States Forest Service; the East Maui Watershed Partnership; the East Moloka'i Watershed Partnership; the Lāna'i Forest and Watershed Partnership; the Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Restoration Partnership; and the West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership.