

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

December 21, 2007

Committee
Report No.

07-151

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

Chair and Members:

Your Budget and Finance Committee, having met on December 3, 2007, makes reference to County Communication No. 07-298, from the Mayor, requesting that the Council receive a presentation from the East Maui Watershed Partnership, Leeward Haleakala Watershed Restoration Partnership, West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership, East Molokai Watershed Partnership, and Lanai Watershed Partnership, relating to watershed protection.

According to County Communication 07-298, the “presentation is designed to build knowledge about our watersheds and to better understand the important role that these partnerships play in protecting our County’s vital water supply.”

Your Committee notes that the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget provides \$500,000 for “Grants and Disbursements for Watershed Protection” under the Economic Development Program in the Office of the Mayor. Your Committee further notes that an additional \$350,000 is provided to nonprofits for watershed protection under the “Water Resources and Planning Program – Water Supply Fund” in the Department of Water Supply.

At its meeting, your Committee met with an Executive Assistant, Office of the Mayor; the Economic Development Coordinator, Office of the Mayor; the Planning Program Manager, Water Resources and Planning Division, Department of Water Supply; the Director of Environmental Management; a Deputy Corporation Counsel; Ed Misaki, Coordinator of the East Molokai Watershed Partnership; Jordan Jokiel, Coordinator of the East Maui Watershed Partnership; Bryan Plunkett, Coordinator of the Lanai Watershed Partnership; Dr. Art Medeiros and Erica VonAllmen, Co-Coordinators of the Leeward Haleakala Watershed Restoration Partnership; and Chris Brosius, Coordinator of the West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership.

There was no public testimony.

Your Committee received a document entitled “County of Maui Watershed Partnerships’ Presentation” from the Executive Assistant.

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Your Committee also received a computer-generated presentation from Mr. Misaki, entitled “State of Hawaii Watershed Partnerships, October 2006”. The presentation discussed the challenges, efforts, and responsibilities of the five watershed partnerships.

Mr. Misaki stated that the overall mission of these watershed partnerships is to stabilize and improve the water regeneration process by preserving and restoring native forest systems. He further stated that the partnerships also want to preserve Hawaii’s unique biodiversity, and control erosion and sedimentation.

Mr. Misaki also explained that the partnerships face many challenges such as removing invasive weeds; controlling ungulates such as pigs, goats and deer; and fire control. He further stated that many partnerships work in remote, steep, weather-prone areas.

The coordinators of each partnership provided a brief description of the current projects within each watershed. The coordinators commented on how the County of Maui has taken a leadership role in protecting the watershed by providing annual funding for operations.

The Executive Assistant stated that the County provides \$100,000 to each of the five watershed partnerships.

Mr. Misaki stated that annual funding from the County allows the partnerships to employ the staff that is necessary to obtain additional funds from other agencies and coordinate the work to be done in the watershed.

Mr. Brosius stated that there is a limited amount of Federal funding available and there is increased competition for these funds.

Mr. Plunkett stated that the private landowner in Lanai provides cash and “in-kind” contributions to the Lanai Watershed Partnership.

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Your Committee voted to recommend filing of the communication.

Your Budget and Finance Committee RECOMMENDS that County
Communication No. 07-298 be FILED.

Adoption of this report is respectfully requested.

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