



Maui Economic Recovery Commission

Keep local people home • Steer hope

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Convening of Maui Economic Recovery Commission

KAHULUI, MAUI – The state of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) and County of Maui Office of Economic Development (OED) convened the first meeting of the Maui Economic Recovery Commission (ERC) on January 5, 2024 at the University of Hawai'i Maui College in Kahului, Hawai'i. Governor Josh Green, M.D., Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen, Chancellor Lui Hokoana, Dr. Hōkūlani Holt, and others welcomed the nearly 90 members of the Maui ERC and promoted collaboration, hope, and community-led ideas.

The Maui ERC was formed in response to the wildfires that devastated Lahaina and Kula and is led by co-chairs James Kunane Tokioka, DBEDT Director, and Luana Mahi, OED Director. It is a collaborative effort that includes a diversity of perspectives from subject matter experts, community members, cultural advisors, union and business leaders, and representatives from the government at the county, state, and federal levels. The majority of ERC members live and work on Maui or work with teams there.

Maui ERC members will actively work together in an advisory capacity to provide guidance and recommendations for projects that will support local recovery priorities in sustaining and rebuilding businesses and employment and develop economic opportunities that align with the community's vision for people and place. The initial phase involves learning, listening, and exchanging insights to chart the best course forward for Maui.

Governor Josh Green said, "The economic recovery projects that come out of this ERC are part of longer-term recovery efforts and a whole county-state-federal framework. As I've said before, Lahaina belongs to its people, and we are committed to rebuilding and restoring it the way they want. The same is true for Kula and the entire island of Maui."

"We are facing a monumental task," Mayor Bissen said. "This inaugural convening of the Maui Economic Recovery Commission was the catalyst to the collective momentum we will need to move forward. The key to progress will be our shared energy and commitment to work in partnership on this journey."

"The diverse perspectives of the Maui ERC and its unwavering commitment to Maui's recovery filled the room with hope and promise," said Luana Mahi. "On behalf of the County of Maui, we deeply appreciate the members for being the driving force behind this monumental initiative. Together, we stand hand-in-hand with the community in our vision to keep our local people home and steer hope toward a brighter economic future."

James Tokioka said, "We are here to support Maui. At DBEDT, we've coordinated the Maui Economic Recovery Commission as a vehicle for Maui residents and business owners to determine what economic recovery looks like. We stand ready to bring our resources to support the outcomes as a result of the Maui ERC."

The Maui ERC will convene as learning groups through April and focus on the following priority areas, which were identified through collaborative discussions: housing, workforce development, community interests, healing, 'āina, and wai. It will then reconvene as a full commission in May and August 2024.

About the State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT)

DBEDT is Hawai'i's resource center for economic and statistical data, business development opportunities, energy and conservation information, and foreign trade advantages. DBEDT's mission is to achieve a Hawai'i economy that embraces innovation and is globally competitive, dynamic and productive, providing opportunities for all Hawai'i's citizens. Through its attached agencies, the department fosters planned community development, creates affordable workforce housing units in high-quality living environments, and promotes innovation-sector job growth.

About the County of Maui Office of Economic Development (OED)

The OED works in partnership with the community, business and government sectors to:

- Strengthen and diversify the economy by supporting existing businesses
- Assisting in the attraction, development and expansion of new businesses and events that will in turn provide new jobs for our community.

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