

## VI.5 NEW BUSINESS

The Honorable Mayor Kimo Alameda  
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

Hawai'i County Council

County of Hawai'i Human Resources Department  
25 Aupuni Street  
Hilo, HI 96720

Subject: Enhancing Workforce Development and Hiring Efforts within the Department of Environmental Management (DEM)

Aloha Mayor Alameda, Members of the Hawai'i County Council, and County HR Leadership,

On behalf of the Environmental Management Commission (EMC), we extend our appreciation for the administration's proactive approach to addressing the long-standing staffing shortages within the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). This is a pivotal step forward. We recognize the importance of strengthening our workforce to ensure the effective delivery of essential environmental services for Hawai'i Island.

As a commissioner that has continuously advocated for solutions to these staffing challenges, we believe this moment offers a valuable opportunity to implement creative and sustainable strategies.

In the spirit of collaboration, the EMC respectfully submits the following recommendations to support and enhance the County's hiring efforts:

### 1. Workforce Development Partnerships:

- a. Establish formal internship and apprenticeship programs with Hawai'i Community College, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and local high schools to create career pathways into DEM.
- b. Engage with trade schools and environmental organizations to promote hands-on learning and job training opportunities.

## 2. Streamlined and Transparent Hiring Processes

- a. Enhance recruitment efforts through digital outreach campaigns and public information sessions.
- b. Provide regular updates to the EMC and the public regarding vacancy counts, job classifications, and the status of ongoing recruitment initiatives.

## 3. Retention and Employee Support

- a. Explore mentorship programs and professional development opportunities within DEM to improve job satisfaction and employee retention.
- b. Consider incentives or tuition assistance programs to encourage long-term careers in environmental management.

## 4. County Charter Review:

a. As part of the EMC's advisory responsibility, we respectfully encourage a mindful review of the constraints within the County Charter that inhibits our ability to address hiring practices to efficiently and effectively allocate resources to the many public services, operations and programs of DEM.\*

By pursuing these avenues, we believe the County can foster a more resilient and skilled workforce, capable of meeting the growing environmental challenges we face. The EMC stands ready to support these efforts and contribute meaningfully to this shared vision of progress.

Mahalo nui loa for your attention and commitment to improving the environmental stewardship of Hawai'i Island. We look forward to continued collaboration and positive change.

Sincerely,