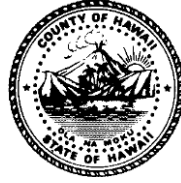


Dr. C. Kimo Alameda
Mayor

Wesley R. Segawa
*Director, Department of
Environmental Management*



Erica Perez
Chair

Dorothy Norris
Vice Chair

County of Hawai'i

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

345 Kekūanāo'a St. Suite 41 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • Ph: (808) 961-8083 • Fax: (808) 961-8086

March 6, 2025

Honorable Holeka Inaba, Chair
and Members of the Hawai'i County Council
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Wesley R. Segawa, Director
Department of Environmental Management
County of Hawai'i
345 Kekūanāo'a Street, Suite 41
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

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

Dear Environmental Management Director Segawa, Honorable Council Chair Inaba and Esteemed Members of the Hawai'i County Council,

The Environmental Management Commission ("EMC") extends its appreciation for the administration's proactive approach to addressing the long-standing staffing shortages within the Department of Environmental Management ("DEM"). EMC believes this is a pivotal step forward that recognizes the importance of strengthening our workforce to ensure the effective delivery of essential environmental services for Hawai'i Island.

The EMC believes 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.
- c) Establish professional development opportunities to learn about green development, emerging technologies, and state-of-the-art equipment.

4. Review of Legal Impediments:

- a) EMC respectfully encourages a mindful review of the various legal constraints that inhibit DEM's 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, the EMC believes that DEM can foster a more resilient and skilled workforce, capable of meeting the County's growing environmental challenges. 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. The EMC looks forward to continued collaboration and positive change.

Sincerely,

Erica Perez
Chair

cc: Environmental Management Commission