

For Immediate Release by:
Yuki Lei Sugimura, Vice-Chair
Tamara Paltin, Councilmember
Maui County Council
yukilei.sugimura@mauicounty.us
tamara.paltin@mauicounty.us

Councilmembers Sugimura and Paltin encourage owners of fire-damaged properties to visit resource centers in West and Central Maui

Maui, Hawaii (October 11, 2023) - Upcounty and West Maui homeowners impacted by the wildfires are encouraged to visit the resource area at the Kalana O Maui Building in Wailuku or the Disaster Recovery Center at the Lahaina Civic Center in West Maui to learn more about the Debris Removal Program for impacted properties. Resources at the two locations, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are available to assist property owners with information regarding Phase 2 of the Debris Removal Program. Resources are available Monday through Saturday at both locations, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Lahaina Civic Center, and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Kalana O Maui Building.

“In the aftermath of a wildfire disaster, there are many steps on the journey to recovery. The fire debris cleanup is a critical part of that journey and involves a phased approach that will require the coordination of local, state and federal partners,” shared Councilmembers Yuki Lei Sugimura and Tamara Paltin in a joint statement.

Property owners will have the choice of opting into the County’s Debris Removal Program, coordinated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and supported by FEMA, or deciding to coordinate their own debris removal under the alternative program.

Bill 86, prepared by Mayor Bissen’s administration and currently pending approval by the County Council, will serve as an initial step in defining the process for property owners who choose to remove fire debris under the alternative program. The bill establishes standards and procedures for the removal of hazardous waste, fire debris, and hazardous trees from properties damaged or destroyed in the August 2023 Maui wildfires.

“The County Council is preparing to take final action on Bill 86, at 9:00 a.m. this Thursday October 12, at a Special Council Meeting,” added Sugimura and Paltin. “If a property owner chooses to remove debris on their own, their contractor must be specialized in hazardous and toxic material recovery and removal and must follow stringent health and safety standards.”

If Bill 86 is approved on October 12, the Council and Administration will then need to work together to approve the requirements of the alternative program to further define the debris removal process.

“As the County Council and Mayor Bissen’s administration continue to work on the requirements of the alternative debris removal program, we strongly encourage impacted property owners to visit with the resource personnel available at the Lahaina Civic Center or the Kalana O Maui Building. These resources will be able to sit down with property owners and answer questions for our Lahaina and Upcountry residents,” shared Sugimura and Paltin.

The Kalana O Maui Building is located at 200 South High Street, and resources are set up in the second floor main lobby. The Lahaina Civic Center is located at 1840 Honoapiilani Highway. Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are available at the recovery centers. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been tasked with coordinating Phase 2 of the debris removal program, in coordination with multiple partner agencies. Fillable Right-of-Entry forms are also available at www.mauirecovers.org/recovery/debrisremoval.

Representatives from the State Department of Health are also available to assist impacted residents who are participating in the reentry process with personal protective equipment. Additionally, the County’s Real Property Tax Division will be available to answer questions.

More information is also available at www.mauirecovers.org/recovery-recovery-phases.

*Council Vice-Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura represents the Upcountry residency area, and Councilmember Tamara Paltin represents the West Maui residency area.