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February 24, 2024

TO: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2610, HD1, RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this measure, which would establish the Disaster Relief Match Special Fund and appropriate funds to provide the local match requirements of the Maui Wildfires Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support** this measure for the following reasons:

1. The cost of rebuilding after the August 2023 Maui wildfires is estimated to be in the billions. Collaboration between and funding from Federal, State, and County governments will be necessary to overcome this immense cost. This measure provides valuable funding for the rebuilding effort.
2. Navigating the federal grant process can be daunting, and failure to do so in a timely manner can result in applicants not receiving grant funds. This measure allows applicants to more easily meet local matching fund requirements, easing part of the burden of accessing the hazard mitigation grant.
3. This measure encourages the use of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to ensure rebuilding efforts are done with resiliency in mind.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.