

June 16, 2026, 9 a.m.  
Kalana O Maui Building

**To: Maui County Council Budget, Finance and Economic Development Committee**  
**Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair**  
**Kauanoë Batangan, Vice Chair**

**From: Jonathan Helton, Policy Analyst**  
**Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**

RE: Bill 73 (2026) — ON REVIEWING THE MAUI COUNTY GRANTS PROGRAM

Aloha Chair Sugimura, Vice Chair Batangan and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [Bill 73 \(2026\)](#), which would standardize the application process for grant programs administered by the county.

Current code dictates that each department or agency that issues grants must write its own administrative rules and procedures for grant applications and awards.

This creates inconsistencies across departments, which makes the grant application process more challenging to navigate. It also raises concerns that certain groups could obtain grants based on relationships with county officials rather than the strength of the application and the organization's ability to meet a genuine public need.

The bill has one deficiency: It does not define which department or agency will write the standardized rules for the county. Grassroot encourages the Council to amend the bill to specify which county department or agency will take responsibility for this task.

To be clear, Grassroot does not solicit funding from Maui County, so this bill would not affect our organization. However, Grassroot does believe this legislation would be helpful in improving accountability in Maui government.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Jonathan Helton  
Policy Analyst  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii