



Senator Shan S. Tsutsui

Hawaii State Senate

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SENATE BUDGET BILL PASSES WITH OVER \$214 MILLION FOR MAUI COUNTY

HONOLULU – The Senate passed its version of the 2009 Executive supplemental budget this morning on the chamber floor. House Bill 2500, HD1, SD1 summarizes the State's appropriations for both operational and capital improvement projects, and can be viewed online at:
http://capitol.hawaii.gov/session2008/bills/HB2500_SD1_.pdf

The measure passed this morning with 22 ayes, 2 noes, and 1 excused. The Senate version includes over \$214 million in capital improvement projects for Maui County. Maui's Senate delegation plays an essential role in securing funding for Maui County through their leadership positions on the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Senator Rosalyn Baker serves as the committee's chairwoman, while Senator Shan S. Tsutsui serves as vice-chair and develops the proposed Capital Improvement Project budget for the committee. In addition, fellow Maui Senator J. Kalani English serves as a key voting member on the committee.

Similar to last year's biennium budget, school projects are a top priority. Funds include \$8 million for construction of the Lānaʻi High and Elementary School classroom building and \$7 million for a multipurpose center at Maui High School. Also included are an additional \$6.7 million for the new cafeteria at Lahainaluna High School as well as improvements to Kīhei Elementary School and Lokelani Intermediate School plus an additional \$20 million for the construction of a new Kīhei High School. Senator Baker noted that, "the Senate put construction of Kīhei High School back into the budget after the House removed it."

Senator English noted it is essential for the \$3.8 million added for the upcountry Maui reservoir to be included. "The reservoir is a necessary step forward in alleviating water shortage problems on Maui, especially in a time when residents need to conserve water." Other relevant projects are \$3 million for Upcountry Maui watershed storage and \$500,000 for Keokeo-Waiohuli water source. Senator English also noted that, "Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, and Kāhoʻolawe also have projects in the Senate version of the budget and we must get the House to agree to those projects."

The budget also reflected appropriations to nonprofit organizations on Maui such as the continued planning and design of the Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. (MEO) Bus System Building. This building will allow all MEO transportation operations to be in the same location. Senator Tsutsui said, "MEO's bus transit facility is an essential project because MEO's services provide needed transportation for elderly and other Maui residents who cannot drive." Furthermore, Tsutsui said, "I believe that Maui concerns were well represented in the Senate budget, and the entire Maui Senate delegation will continue to push for funding during the next few weeks."

The budget is now slated to be discussed between the House and Senate in conference committees beginning next week.

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