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Press Release by:

Councilmember Councilmember Michael J. Molina 

Council approves Molina's request to increase affordable housing requirements for the State's Fast Track 201H projects

WAILUKU – Today the Maui County Council approved Bill 10, (2021) Draft 1, entitled “A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 2.96.030, MAUI COUNTY CODE, RELATING TO RESIDENTIAL WORKFORCE HOUSING PROJECTS DEVELOPED UNDER CHAPTER 201H, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES”

The purpose of Bill 10, (2021) Draft 1 (Bill 10) is to require that 201H affordable housing projects submitted to the county must consist of a minimum of 75 percent of the total units for individuals and families within very low, low, low-moderate, moderate and above-moderate income households.

Bill 10, has received six hearings by the Council and its Affordable Housing Committee, during which the Council heard testimony both for and against the bill.

Opposition to Bill 10 included concerns that it would discourage use of the 201H process to fast-track housing projects that include both market rate units and affordable dwellings.

Others noted it was unclear what was the impetus for the 75 percent requirement for 201H affordable housing projects.

Individuals that supported Bill 10 included affordable housing advocates, certain community-based organizations and individuals and families in need of clean affordable housing.

“When I introduced the bill, I did not anticipate it would generate so much interest both for and against it, said Molina. I was hoping to develop another option to address our affordable housing needs.”

During Bill 10's review it was amended to provide flexibility in the affordable housing percentage requirement. Councilmember Tamara Paltin offered an amendment that would allow a developer to request an exemption if they could not achieve the 75% requirement. The revision garnered support from the majority of the Council.

“It’s important to note that Bill 10, as amended, simply asks for more affordable housing, it does not mandate more housing”, said Molina. “What’s wrong with asking for more affordable housing?”

Some have suggested that the Council should wait until the Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan (Plan) was completed.

“The Council received a draft of the Plan and with all due respect it was disappointing, said Molina. The Plan recommended donation of land over the building of affordable dwellings.”

“Yes, we need land to build housing, but we need dwellings now, said Molina. Placing families housing should be our immediately priority”.

“The Plan further places a \$1.6 billion onus our tax payers, said Molina. Where is the partnership with the private sector in the creation of affordable housing?”

“So, I say we can’t afford to wait, we need action now, said Molina. I realize Bill 10 will not resolve the affordable housing crisis, but it’s another tool in our arsenal.”

The 201H process allows projects that comply with Section 201H-41 (a) and (b), Hawaii Revised Statutes to “be exempt from statutes, ordinances, charter provisions and rules of any government agency relating to zoning and construction standards for subdivisions, development, and improvement of land and the construction, improvement, and sale of dwelling units thereon.”

** Mike Molina is Chair of the Council’s Governance, Ethics, and Transparency Committee. He holds the council seat for the Makawao-Haiku-Paia residency area. Go to mike.molina@mauicounty.us for more information or call 270-5507.*

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