



## MEDIA RELEASE

# HAWAI‘I CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$42 MILLION IN FEDERAL GRANTS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO TREES AND GREEN SPACE IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Washington, DC) – U.S. Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI), and U.S. Representatives Ed Case (HI-01) and Jill Tokuda (HI-02) today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded \$42,585,500 in grants to nine organizations to plant and maintain trees, combat extreme heat, and improve access to green space in communities throughout the state. The largest award - \$20 million – went to Kupu, a conservation and youth education nonprofit based in Honolulu.

“We need to be doing everything we can to make our communities more resilient to climate change,” said **Senator Schatz**. “This funding will help expand our urban tree canopy and mitigate the effects of extreme heat – all while providing job training opportunities to those who need it most.”

(more)

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“As we work to mitigate the impacts of climate change and promote sustainability, this funding brings us one step closer in creating healthier, more equitable communities across Hawai‘i,” said **Senator Hirono**. “This historic investment in urban forests will help ensure people in Hawaii have access to quality outdoor spaces, no matter where they live. I am proud to have helped pass the Inflation Reduction Act last year—the largest action on climate change ever passed by Congress, which made this funding possible.”

“The funding was made possible through the Inflation Reduction Act , the largest climate and energy related investment in our history, so that we can fully seek and obtain the assistance offered for various critical projects,” said **Representative Case**. “These grants administered by the USDA’s Urban and Community Forestry Program provides the organizations the crucial funding needed to strengthen Hawaii’s capacity to advance climate resiliency efforts.”

“This grant administered by the USDA’s program provides Kupu the crucial funding needed to expand opportunities for, and develop marketable professional skills of, the Pacific workforce to strengthen Hawai‘i and other Pacific communities and their capacity to advance climate resiliency efforts.”

"Communities across our state are looking at the extreme drought conditions and rising temperatures in their own backyards and they are scared,” said **Representative Tokuda**. “This USDA funding is critical as we meet the moment and invest in adaptable green spaces, plant native trees and flora to combat heat and reduce fire risks, combat urban heat islands, mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, and ensure long term climate resiliency.”

In addition to Kupu’s \$20 million award, the other organizations awarded grants include\*:

- Smart Trees Pacific \$9 million
- Grow Good Hawaii \$5 million

(more)

(3)

- Friends of Amy B.H. Greenwell  
Ethnobotanical Garden \$2 million
- State of Hawaii Department of Land &  
Natural Resources (DLNR)  
Division of Forestry & Wildlife \$2 million
- University of Hawaii \$2 million
- Akaka Foundation for Tropical Forests \$1 million
- City & County of Honolulu  
Department of Parks and Recreation \$1 million
- DLNR \$585,500

\*See attachment to read how each organization will use the funding.

“These investments arrive as cities across the country experience record-breaking heatwaves that have grave impacts on public health, energy consumption, and overall well-being,” said **Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack**.

“Thanks to President Biden’s Investing in America agenda, we are supporting communities in becoming more resilient to climate change and combatting extreme heat with the cooling effects of increased urban tree canopy, while also supporting employment opportunities and professional training that will strengthen local economies.”

The Urban and Community Forestry Program is the only program in the federal government dedicated to enhancing and expanding the nation's urban forest resources. This is the largest single USDA Inflation Reduction Act investment to date in urban and community forests.

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