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June 22, 2016
The Maui News

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Just about one year ago we suggested in an editorial that it might well be time to change from the current strong mayor-council form of government to a professional manager-council format.

We reasoned that with the population of the county roaring past the 160,000 mark and budgets zooming inexorably upward, a professional, nonpartisan manager might be the best bet for day-to-day administration of county services.

We cited the International City/County Management Association in defining the structure:

"(It) combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed manager or administrator. All power and authority to set policy rests with an elected governing body, which includes a mayor or chairperson and members of the council, commission, or board.

"The governing body in turn hires a nonpartisan manager who has very broad authority to run the organization."

A committee was set up by the County Council to study the issue of governance. A majority of that committee has recommended that an amendment to the County Charter to change to a manager-council form be put on the ballot this November.

While we are not completely happy with the form of council-manager government the committee is recommending, we would strongly urge the council to let the people vote on the issue.

There are over four months left before the general election. Let the two sides of the issue debate the pros and cons of a change. We will all emerge from a vigorous debate wiser.

Put the amendment on the ballot.

* Editorials reflect the opinion of the publisher.

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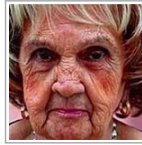
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