

The Garden Island

In our opinion

Shot in the dark

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The upcoming county budget review process needs to be televised, plain and simple.

These crucial few weeks of meetings, which scrutinize each department to varying degrees, are arguably the most important of the year.

Let's not keep residents in the dark when it comes to deciding how to spend their hard-earned money. With millions of dollars less to go around next fiscal year, the need for community members to have easy access to what cuts to services and increases to fees are being made becomes all the more important.

If the broadcasting cost is the excuse, let's get our priorities straight. Skip a few of the less critical committee or commission meetings if the money really can't be found in the budget.

The county has done a disservice to the community in the past by failing to air these sessions on Ho'iike as it does for all the other regular council meetings. Many residents, if not most, lack the opportunity to attend in person to listen to the discussion and testify on the matters at hand because the meetings are held during regular business hours.

Fortunately, Council members Tim Bynum and Lani Kawahara have put forward a communication requesting agenda time Wednesday to discuss televising the council's budget proceedings from fiscal year 2010-2011. We hope their colleagues back their play and make the necessary moves to get the cameras rolling.

Let's increase public participation in our local government by improving access.

If the county isn't willing to ante up despite the public pleas for these meetings to be televised, we will do our best to not only maintain our regular coverage in the daily paper but also by streaming the meetings live at www.thegardenisland.com. If you can't attend the meetings — which start soon after the mayor's budget submittal expected next week — we encourage you to stay informed by watching online.

Learn how your elected officials want to spend your money, then let your voice be heard.