

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 2485

January 31, 2008

RELATING TO FIRES

House Bill No. 2485 establishes the Firewise Hawaii Program in the Department of Land and Natural Resources to assist communities with wildland fire hazards. This bill also establishes a Firewise Hawaii Special Fund for the deposit of legislative appropriations, public and private contributions, earned interest and funds from other sources. The proposed fund would be used to carry out the purposes of the Firewise Hawaii Program.

As a matter of general policy, this department does not support the creation of any special or revolving fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. Special or revolving funds should: 1) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries of the program; 2) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 3) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. It is difficult to determine whether the proposed fund meets any of the above criteria.

har1-En

From: Tommie Suganuma
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 9:19 AM
To: PSMtestimony
Subject: FW: HB2485 Firewise

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherry Davis [mailto:SherryDavis@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 26, 2008 1:57 PM
To: Rep. Cindy Evans
Subject: HB2485 Firewise

Aloha Cindy,

You will probably get alot of emails like this because of the lobbying efforts that are going on about HB2485. Yes, I think most of the residents of Waikoloa want the bill expanded to include funding of a variety of wildfire mitigation actions that we need in Kohala, especially in South Kohala. We need a Hawaii Wildlands-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Fund to be established to fund mitigation work throughout the islands.

Hopefully these efforts will reduce the fires in our area.

Mahalo,
Sherry

har1-En

From: Tommie Suganuma on behalf of Rep. Cindy Evans
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 9:22 AM
To: PSMtestimony
Subject: FW: re HB2485

-----Original Message-----

From: John P. Hoover [mailto:hooverjph@mac.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 26, 2008 12:56 PM
To: Rep. Cindy Evans
Subject: re HB2485

Cindy,

Please expand HB2485 Firewise Program to include mitigation actions needed in South Kohala, specifically, a Hawaii Wildlands-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Fund to fund mitigation work through out the State.

Thanks for your consideration.

John Hoover

Hokuloa United Church of Christ
location: 69-1600 Puako Beach Road, Kamuela, HI 96743
mail: PO Box 384239, Waikoloa, HI 96738
Telephone: 883-8295
Fax: 883-8295
Pastor: Rev John P. Hoover
e-mail: hooverjph@mac.com

har1-En

From: Tommie Suganuma on behalf of Rep. Cindy Evans
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 9:37 AM
To: PSMtestimony
Subject: FW: Wildfire Mitigation Bill

From: Waimeawind@aol.com [mailto:Waimeawind@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 7:52 AM
To: Rep. Cindy Evans
Subject: Wildfire Mitigation Bill

I support this bill.

Please make sure it is passed and funded.

Michael W. Kimball, MD
Puako

Start the year off right. Easy ways to stay in shape in the new year.

MCS International

Marine and Coastal Solutions International, Inc.

P.O. Box 6882, Kamuela, Hawaii 96743 USA

Tel: (808) 885-6354 Fax: (808) 443-0366 Email: mcstewart@hawaii.rr.com

M. Carolyn Stewart

Principal Consultant

30 January 2008

TO: Representative Cindy Evans
Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
Facsimile: (808) 586-8514

FR: Carolyn Stewart

RE: HB 2485 Firewise Hawaii Program Special Fund

Aloha Representative Evans:

I strongly request that HB 2485 be expanded to ensure effective wildfire mitigation. Limiting the special fund to Firewise projects will limit the projects that can be supported to reduce the threat of wildfire. Wildfire mitigation is much broader than Firewise; it includes a variety of activities such as grazing, mechanical control, conversion of fuels, network of traditional fuelbreaks, aerial spraying, and public education and outreach. Firewise is just one small part of wildfire mitigation.

HB 2485 is a very important and timely bill, given the number of wildfires in 2007 and the potential for more fires this year. However, changing its focus to a Wildfire Mitigation Fund will ensure its effectiveness to address the range of wildfire mitigation options.

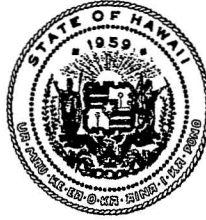
Please call me at (808) 885-6354 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



M. Carolyn Stewart

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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LAND
STATE PARKS

**TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

on House Bill 2485 - RELATING TO FIRES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS

January 31, 2008

House Bill 2485 establishes a firewise Hawaii program in the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to address the growing fire danger in wildland-urban interface areas, creates a firewise Hawaii special fund with sources of revenue and uses, and makes an appropriation to the fund. While the Department supports the intent of this measure to create a statewide firewise program, it nonetheless has concerns with the budgetary implications this bill will have on the State Multi-Year Financial Plan. The Department defers to the Department of Budget and Finance on the mechanism of setting up a special fund.

The Department believes that a firewise program is a useful tool to promote wildland-urban interface fire protection in Hawaii, and currently works closely with the communities and each county fire department in implementing the federal firewise community planning projects. The firewise program was initially started by the Department to provide a model for adoption by the Counties with the Department providing technical support and funding via a federal grant program. The Four Counties have developed information, technology, and resource networks to establish standards for fire protection and service on their islands and have adopted a State Fire Code model that mirrors the State of California's, State Fire Marshall Urban wildland Interface Code for managing their wildland-urban interface fire areas and adoption of firewise communities.

The Department currently administers the national Federal Firewise grant program and federal funding and will continue to do so. Establishing a new special fund and additional funding sources will increase the Department's ability to sustain and implement this program.

Additionally, the Department suggests that the measure should be amended to add the new section to Chapter 185, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) – Land Fire Protection Law, rather than Chapter 183, HRS - Forest Reserves. That would put the measure in line with the other land fire protection provisions of the Department.