

TO: Senate Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Mary Ikagawa, Kailua

**IN SUPPORT of SB2316, Making An Appropriation To Build and Maintain a
Perimeter Fence to Protect the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve.**

To be heard Monday, February 11, 2008, 2:30 p.m., Conference Room 414

Aloha Senators,

Hawai'i's Forest Reserve system was created to protect important natural areas. However, giving something a name is not the same as providing protection. The unique Hawaiian plants, animals, and land of the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve are being harmed by prolific introduced animals that can only be removed with a concerted effort that includes fencing. We are fast losing the things that make Hawai'i a wonder of the biological world, and unique among all places on the planet. Significant spending to protect these things is appropriate, desirable and required to ensure future opportunities and quality of life for Hawai'i's people.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



SB 2316 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO BUILD AND
MAINTAIN A PERIMETER FENCE TO PROTECT
THE MAUNA KEA FOREST RESERVE

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land

February 11, 2008

by
William Stormont
Director, Office of Mauna Kea Management
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land
February 11, 2008 - 2:30 p.m.

by
William Stormont
Director, Office of Mauna Kea Management
University of Hawai`i at Hilo

**SB 2316 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN A
PERIMETER FENCE TO PROTECT THE MAUNA KEA FOREST
RESERVE**

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Kokubun and Members of the Committee

The University of Hawai`i at Hilo offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2316 regarding an appropriation of funds for the construction and maintenance of a perimeter fence to protect the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve.

Properly constructed and maintained perimeter fences are key to long-term protection of native ecosystems and habitat for endangered flora and fauna from the devastating impact of feral animals. This is especially true on Mauna Kea, where the native mamane tree (*Sophora chrysophylla*) provides exclusive habitat for the endangered palila bird (*Loxioides bailleui*), and is the lone location for the endangered Mauna Kea silversword (*Argyroxiphium sandwicense*, subsp. sandwicense) and numerous other rare and unique elements of Hawaiian biota.

Further, effective perimeter fencing will enhance the ongoing federal court-ordered feral sheep and goat eradication efforts by limiting ingress from adjoining areas, ensuring efficient and effective use of the resources and funding expended to meet that order. Feral animal eradication efforts are far more effective if the target population is finite, which properly constructed and maintained perimeter fencing helps to ensure.

The University would also encourage funding be appropriated for active, ongoing management of the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve, specifically for mitigating the potentially devastating impacts of wildfire, and for non-native invasive species control. Effective long-term protection can only be attained through a combination of protective fencing and active management actions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



For the Protection of Hawaii's Native Wildlife
HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

850 Richards Street, Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813-4709

Phone/Fax: (808) 528-1432; hiaudsoc@pixi.com

www.hawaiiudubon.com

EMAIL: testimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

TO: **Committee on Water and Land**
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair and Senator Russell Kokubun, Vice Chair

HEARING: **Monday, February 11, 2008; 2:30 P.M., Conference Rm. 414**

RE: **SB2316, Relating to Mauna Kea Forest Reserve Fence**

LATE TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Kokubun and members of the Committee on Water and Land My name is George Massengale, I a member of the Hawai'i Audubon Society and during session I serve as their Legislative Analyst. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony in strong support of SB2316, which would make an appropriation to build and maintain a perimeter fence to protect the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve

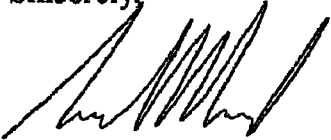
The Hawaii Audubon Society was founded in 1939, and the States oldest conservation organization. The Society's primary mission is the protection of Hawaii's native wildlife and habitats. This includes protecting critical habitat for the survival of the endangered Palila, a finch-billed species of Hawaiian honeycreeper. The bird is in a close ecological relationship with the Mamane tree. The Palila is endangered primarily due to destruction of Mamane-naio woodland. The Palila feeds almost exclusively on the plants' immature seeds when these are in season. It also nests in the mamane branches. Feral goats and sheep voraciously eat the seed pods of the plant, negatively impacting the tree's population. Ranch cattle can kill trees through stomping on the roots. Māmane grows well in areas where there are no sheep or goats, and cattle populations are limited. The plant is being reforested in order to increase the population of both the tree itself and the palila, and revive the indigenous ecosystem.

Appropriating funds DLNR for fence construction and maintance will have a postive impact by keeping feral sheep and mouflon away from Mamane tree thus ensuring the surviability of the Palila.

SB2316 is a good measure, and we urge the committee to pass it on to Ways & Means.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George Massengale', written in a cursive style.

**George Massengale, JD
Legislative Analyst**

testimony

From: Andrea Jepson [jepsona001@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 09, 2008 6:29 PM
To: testimony
Subject: SB2316 Testimony
Importance: High

February 11, 2008 – Testimony Submittal

To: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Russell S. Kokubun, Vice Chair

Hearing: Monday, February 11, 2008
2:30 PM– Conference room 414

LATE TESTIMONY

SB 2316 Report Title:

Mauna Kea Forest Reserve Fence; Appropriation

Description:

Makes an appropriation to build and maintain a perimeter fence to protect the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve

Chair Yee and members of the committee,

I would like offer testimony in support of SB 2316

Critical habitat for the endangered palila bird and the Mauna Kea silverswords is threatened by feral sheep and mouflon in the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve, the result of perimeter fences that are in disrepair.

Rebuilding the entire perimeter fence is a prudent and responsible action that is necessary to protect this important habitat.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Andrea I. Jepson
1111 Kooahoo Place
Kailua, HI 96734
808-263-8202

testimony

From: Ann Strong [fff25@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 09, 2008 4:21 PM
To: testimony
Subject: SB2316

LATE TESTIMONY

I support:

SB 2316 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN A PERIMETER FENCE TO PROTECT THE MAUNA KEA FOREST RESERVE

Thank you,

Ann Strong
Keaau, HI

Be a better friend, newshound, and know-it-all with Yahoo! Mobile. [Try it now.](#)

Fax: 586-6659

February 10, 2008

Please make copies of attached testimony and deliver for hearing:

SB 2316 – Mauna Kea Forest Reserve Fence

Senate Committee on Water and Land

Conference Room 414 – 2:30 p.m. Monday, February 11, 2008

Chair Hee
Vice Chair Kokubun

Total pages including cover: 2

Heidi Wild

Marketing Consultant, Hawaii Forest Industry Association
(808) 587-7048

LATE TESTIMONY



LATE TESTIMONY

SB 2316 Mauna Kea Forest Reserve Fence

Senate Committee on Water and Land

Conference Room 414 – 2:30 p.m. Monday, February 11, 2008

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Kokubun, Committee members, my name is Heidi Wild speaking on behalf of Mike Robinson, President of the Hawaii Forest Industry Association.

Thank you in advance for allowing me to present testimony to you in support of SB2316.

SB2316 makes an appropriation to build and maintain a perimeter fence to protect the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve. This fencing is necessary to protect the reserve, and the critical habitat of endangered bird and fauna. Without proper repair and maintenance, controlling unwanted feral sheep, goats and other animals will be a constant battle. This is a very important issue for the protection of this reserve.

HFIA is a non-profit Hawaii organization, incorporated in 1989, which promotes a balance of forest land uses and sound management practices for all of Hawaii's forests. Our industry generates over \$35 million in business for the State, through the products and services of our approximately 200 member companies and individuals. We have worked closely with HDOA, the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) in the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) over the past 15 years to promote, foster and develop industry standards, initiate forestry research and development, and promote quality control and industry integrity in the State of Hawaii as a means of diversifying our economy and protecting our environment.

HFIA appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SB2316** to you today.

Hawaii Forest Industry Association

Mike E. Robinson
President

testimony

From: Suzanna Valerie [suzannavalerie@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 10, 2008 2:10 PM
To: testimony
Subject: Testimony in support of SB2316

Senator Clayton Hee,
Chair, Senate Committee on Water and Land

Dear Senator Hee,

I wish to offer my personal perspectives on the state of the forest on Mauna Kea in hopes that SB 2316 will be enacted to help protect important features of our natural heritage. My testimony in support of SB 2316 stems from 20 years of professional experience as a wildlife researcher; however, I make these comments as a private citizen and resident of the Big Island since 1966.

Palila continue to be at risk but restoration is possible. Mauna Kea supports natural plant and animal communities that are represented, but not duplicated, only on portions of Mauna Loa, Hualālai, and Haleakalā Volcanoes. Most notably, the upper reaches of Mauna Kea are the last refuge of the endangered endemic bird, palila, which, though more widespread historically, is now confined primarily to a portion of the western slope of Mauna Kea where māmane trees are most abundant. Māmane trees provide palila with nearly all of its food and most of its nesting and roosting sites. Because palila prefer larger trees over smaller ones, the palila population has not quickly benefited from the cohort of smaller, younger saplings that have sprouted since 1980, when the State began reducing numbers of sheep and other ungulates. Nevertheless, a small population of palila has been re-established on the northern slope, and the species can be recovered with diligent management of threats to birds and their habitat.

Forest continues to be damaged by alien browsers. Although ungulate populations have been curtailed to some degree, browsing damage is still readily apparent throughout the forest and is severe locally where ungulates tend to congregate. For example, near the upper limits of the forest, browsers have removed virtually all māmane seedlings and small saplings, retarding efforts to restore the palila population. In addition to māmane, other native plants suffer from ungulate browsers on Mauna Kea.

Fencing should be improved as first-step in forest protection. Current efforts to reduce ungulate populations through public hunting and contract aerial shooting are insufficient to protect the māmane and other important native plants on Mauna Kea, in part because the perimeter fence around the forest reserve and palila critical habitat are in disrepair. Despite hundreds of ungulates removed annually, large herds as well as scattered bands of browsing animals continue to roam the mountain. Ungulates cross in and out of the forest reserve in many places, making it all but impossible to eliminate these destructive invasive pests. Because mouflon sheep especially are capable of jumping high obstacles, a high (at least 6 feet) and well-maintained fence is a critical first step to protect native communities of plants and animals, watershed function, and recreational opportunities for Hawaii's citizens wishing to appreciate their natural heritage. Although portions of the fence have been repaired with federal funds, an earnest effort (approximately \$6 million) is needed to accomplish the job.

Mahalo for considering my comments on this important issue. I would be pleased to discuss this matter with you and others of your committee at your request.

Aloha,

Paul C. Banko
P.O. Box 549
Volcano, HI 96785

967-7610 (home phone)

FREE Animations for your email - by IncrediMail!

[Click Here!](#)



testimony

From: Marcia Stone [stone.marcia@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 10, 2008 10:07 AM
To: testimony
Subject: Fencing for Mauna Kea Forest Reserve

LATE TESTIMONY

I was with a group of bird watchers recently in the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve. The Reserve is full of beautiful specimens of naio and mamane in quantities I have not seen elsewhere. There was even a large sandalwood tree. This area is worth protecting, and I support the State's efforts to keep the sheep and goats out with a secure fence. Thank you.

Marcia Stone
Volcano, Hawaii

testimony

From: MomBurgess@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, February 10, 2008 7:32 PM
To: testimony@hawaii.gov
Subject: Support SB 2316

LATE TESTIMONY

Please make available the necessary funding for protection of our forests on the Big Island. Many of us are working to restore areas such as Hakalau Forest and it is hard and difficult work to eradicate the plants that were put there for cattle. With pigs and other animals looking for food our work can easily be destroyed. If you have had the opportunity of driving up to the snow on Mauna Kea, you must know what a unique and beautiful place it is. Many say it is sacred. It would be a wise and prudent action to protect it.

**Aloha,
Sara Burgess**

Who's never won? [Biggest Grammy Award surprises of all time on AOL Music.](#)