
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that immediate action is
2 needed to secure Hawai'i's water supply. Hotter, drier
3 conditions and damaged watershed forests are escalating the
4 costs and conflicts over water.

5 While climate change is a problem on a global scale,
6 simple, local actions can safeguard Hawai'i's declining water
7 sources. Through Act 152, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2000, the
8 legislature recognized that fresh water is not an infinite
9 resource and its high quality, quantity, and sustainability
10 depend upon forested watersheds. Without vegetation, most of
11 our islands' rainfall would quickly run off into the ocean and
12 be unusable. Instead, forests break the impact of heavy rains,
13 reducing flooding and erosion and siltation of reefs and
14 fisheries.

15 Protecting forest watersheds is the most cost effective and
16 efficient way to absorb rainwater and replenish ground water.
17 Watersheds also reduce impacts from climate change by absorbing

1 greenhouse gases, a component of the Hawai'i Clean Energy
2 Initiative to help the State reach its policy targets to reduce
3 greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by year 2020, enacted by
4 the legislature by way of Act 234, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2007.
5 Additionally, forests sustain irreplaceable cultural and natural
6 values.

7 Half of Hawai'i's forests have already been lost. Alien
8 species, such as feral pigs and goats trample and devour
9 vegetation, leaving bare ground or openings for alien plants
10 that consume more water and increase runoff. The gradual
11 invasion of alien plants into native forests may have already
12 reduced the estimated groundwater recharge by up to 10 per cent
13 in certain aquifers. For example in East Hawai'i, invasive
14 plants have already reduced estimated groundwater recharge by 85
15 million gallons a day. Controlling these and other threats
16 requires a large-scale effort to protect these irreplaceable
17 natural assets.

18 Governor Neil Abercrombie's "A New Day in Hawai'i" plan
19 calls for the stewardship of the natural resources that our
20 survival, economy, and quality of life depend on. Priority
21 actions of the plan include managing invasive species,

1 increasing Hawai'i's ability to withstand impacts from climate
2 change, and restoring capabilities of the department of land and
3 natural resources by finding additional sources of funding. The
4 Abercrombie Administration's New Day Status report also tasks
5 the department of land and natural resources to ensure mauka
6 watersheds are fully functioning so fresh water resources can be
7 utilized and enjoyed by the people of Hawai'i in perpetuity. To
8 implement these central goals of the Abercrombie administration,
9 the department of land and natural resources released "The Rain
10 Follows the Forest - a plan to protect Hawai'i's Source of
11 Water."

12 "The Rain Follows the Forest" identifies priority
13 watersheds and outlines on-the-ground actions and projects
14 required to protect and sustain Hawai'i's critical water sources.
15 The forests and their ability to capture water depend on the
16 protection provided by the actions listed in this plan. To be
17 successful, these actions must occur on a large scale across
18 ownership boundaries, through agreements and leveraged funds
19 provided by the statewide watershed partnerships. Currently,
20 only 10 per cent (approximately 90,000 acres) of the priority
21 watershed areas are protected. This level of management has
22 taken 40 years to achieve. The department of land and natural

1 resources' goal is to double the amount of protected watershed
2 areas in just 10 years. This will require approximately \$11
3 million per year, and create over 150 local jobs.

4 The legislature further finds and declares that the State
5 needs to direct revenues towards new priorities and move
6 immediately to fund the protection of these watersheds and
7 implement this comprehensive plan to ensure the availability and
8 affordability of fresh water. Watershed protection and
9 restoration must be funded commensurate with its essential role.
10 Hawai'i's leaders must come together and incorporate funding
11 policies within the State's overall financial plan to reverse
12 the grave decline of the islands' life-giving forests in order
13 to sustain and enrich current and future generations.

14 The purpose of this Act is to provide funds to the
15 department of land and natural resources for the immediate
16 protection of priority watershed forests to replenish Hawaii's
17 water supplies and provide many other fundamental benefits to
18 Hawaii's environmental health.

19 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
20 revenues of the State of Hawai'i the sum of \$ or so
21 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to be
22 expended on projects undertaken in accordance with watershed

1 management plans including but not limited to invasive species
2 removal, construction and ongoing maintenance of fences,
3 control of other forest threats, and restoration.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
5 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2012.

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INTRODUCED BY:



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BY REQUEST
JAN 23 2012

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H .B. NO. 2520

Report Title:

Watershed Protection; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the immediate protection of priority watershed forests to replenish Hawaii's water supplies and provide many other fundamental benefits to Hawaii's environmental health.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

HB 2520

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Land and Natural Resources

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

PURPOSE: To appropriate funds to the Department for the immediate protection of priority watershed forests to replenish Hawaii's water supplies and provide many other fundamental benefits to Hawai'i's environmental health.

MEANS: Request for appropriation of funds for Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

JUSTIFICATION: Immediate action is needed to secure Hawai'i's water supply. Hotter, drier conditions and damaged watershed forests are escalating the costs and conflicts over water. Protecting forest watersheds is the most cost effective and efficient way to absorb rainwater and replenish ground water.

Without vegetation, most of our islands' rainfall would quickly run off into the ocean in and be unusable. Instead, the forests break the impact of heavy rains, reducing flooding and erosion and siltation of reefs and fisheries. Additionally, forests sustain irreplaceable cultural and natural values.

Half of Hawai'i's forests have already been lost. Alien species, such as feral pigs and goats trample and devour vegetation, leaving bare ground or openings for alien plants that consume more water and increase runoff.

Governor Neil Abercrombie's "A New Day in Hawai'i" plan calls for the stewardship of the natural resources that our survival, economy, and quality of life depend on. Priority actions of the plan include

managing invasive species, increasing Hawai'i's ability to withstand impacts from climate change, and restoring capabilities of the Department by finding additional sources of funding. To implement these central goals of the Abercrombie Administration, the Department released "The Rain Follows the Forest - a plan to protect Hawai'i's Source of Water."

The Department's goal is to double the acres of protected watershed areas in 10 years. This will require approximately \$11 million per year, and create over 150 local jobs.

The State needs to direct revenues towards new priorities and move immediately to fund the protection of these watersheds and implement this comprehensive plan to ensure the availability and affordability of fresh water. Watershed protection and restoration must be funded commensurate with its essential role. Hawai'i's leaders must come together and incorporate funding policies within the State's overall financial plan to reverse the grave decline of the islands' life-giving forests in order to sustain and enrich current and future generations.

Impact on the public: Would help protect against effects of climate change such as flooding, water shortages, and spread of invasive species. This will reduce costs from future damage caused by climate change.

Impact on the department and other agencies: Would increase funding for departmental programs that protect watershed forests.

GENERAL FUND: Unspecified amount.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: LNR 407.

HB 2520

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES:

Department of Budget and Finance.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

July 1, 2012.