

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of  
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR  
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, February 29, 2012  
2:30 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2250, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE.**

House Bill 2250, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds for the establishment of an emergency environmental workforce to provide short-term employment for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed due to slow economic recovery by assisting the State's efforts to protect watersheds and eradicate invasive species. Watershed protection and related environmental management activities are of utmost priority to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), therefore the Department acknowledges the intent of this bill, however, has serious concerns about unintended opportunity costs and thus respectfully opposes this bill.

House Bill 2250, House Draft 1 endeavors to promote economic recovery by employing five hundred to seven hundred fifty individuals on a six-month contract to assist the State's efforts in ongoing environmental protection projects. This bill proposes doing so by redirecting approximately \$6,300,000 of special funds away from Department funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012-2013.

House Bill 2250, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate \$1,400,000 from the Natural Area Reserve Fund (NARF) which provides support for several vital programs including the Watershed Partnership Program, Natural Area Partnership, Forest Stewardship Program, Youth Conservation Corps, Natural Area Reserves System, management of Forest Reserves, Invasive Species Councils, Endangered Species programs, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. NARF is funded by transfers from the Conveyance Tax (CT), and the CT is seeing a thirty percent decrease in Fiscal Year 2012 as compared to FY 2011, thus projected NARF revenues for FY 2013 are much lower than anticipated. Based on the CT decrease, for the first

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CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

GUY H. KAULUKUKUI  
FIRST DEPUTY

WILLIAM M. TAM  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
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LAND  
STATEPARKS

quarter of FY 2013 projected NARF revenue is \$1,271,667, projected NARF personnel expense is \$550,000, and projected NARF operation cost is \$1,750,000. Funding for NARF operations will already be nearly \$1,000,000 less than anticipated, and with approximately half of operation expenses providing salaries for contracted employees, any further loss of funding as proposed by this bill would threaten numerous positions.

House Bill 2250, House Draft 1 also proposes to appropriate from the following funds: The Land Conservation Fund which supports the Legacy Land Conservation Program that provides crucial protection of watersheds and other natural, cultural, and agricultural resources; The Wildlife Resources Fund which provides for the recovery of endangered and threatened species and early detection of harmful invasive species; The Forest Stewardship Fund which supports the Forest Reserve System that hosts over 640,000 acres of the State's most important watersheds and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program that promotes native forest restoration and conservation on degraded agricultural lands; The Water Resource Management Fund which provides essential management of our precious public trust resource; The Special Land and Development Fund which is a crucial source of funds for the abovementioned programs and also provides key support for the Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, Division of State Parks, and the Engineering Division, as well as funding for emergency response to natural catastrophe such as fire, rock-fall, flood, earthquake.

Passage of this bill could have myriad unintended opportunity costs and negative consequences including threats to already effective watershed projects, the loss of dollars vital for match for federal grants, and potential reduction in staff. Because stripping funds that are critical to maintain an already functioning and successful environmental workforce in order to create a short-term environmental workforce could threaten current watershed projects, implementation of this bill could in actuality contradict its intent. The Department actively supports partnerships in watershed protection efforts, however the proposed bill would not necessarily function to provide support to the Department's watershed protection efforts but rather might hinder such.

House Bill 2250, House Draft 1 also proposes to appropriate \$2,000,000 out of the general fund and issue \$2,000,000 in general obligation bonds for environmental protection activities, contingent on release of sixty five percent the previously mentioned Department funds. The Department supports the appropriation of general funds and bonds for environmental protection, yet suggests such not be dependent on redirecting funds away from established Department programs.

While the Department acknowledges the intent of this bill to aid economic recovery and promote watershed protection, the Department nonetheless expresses serious concern regarding the consequences of steering funds away from the aforementioned successful programs towards short-term projects that lack dedicated funding. For the abovementioned reasons the Department respectfully opposes House Bill 2250, House Draft 1.

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DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
**COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
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**Testimony of  
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.  
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, February 29, 2012  
2:30 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In Consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2250, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE**

House Bill 2250, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds for the establishment of an emergency environmental workforce for short-term employment for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed due to the slow economic recovery by assisting the State's efforts to protect watersheds and eradicate invasive species. The testimony of the Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) is limited to SECTION 7 of this measure. While the Commission appreciates the intent of this bill to protect watersheds and thereby sustain our water supplies, the Commission has serious concerns about the impact of this measure on the Commission's ability to carry out its public trust duties under the State Water Code and thus respectfully **opposes** SECTION 7 of this bill.

SECTION 7 of House Bill 2250, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate out of the Water Resource Management Fund (WRMF) \$300,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to establish the emergency environmental workforce.

The WRMF is critical to support essential positions, programs, and activities of the Commission. The Commission is constitutionally mandated to carry out its public trust duties to protect and manage the fresh water resources of Hawaii.

1. The WRMF provides salaries for three key Planning Branch positions: State Drought and Water Conservation Coordinator, Hydrologist VI, and Hydrologist IV. These three positions comprise the entire professional nonsupervisory staff of the Planning Branch, which is responsible for integrating programs to protect, conserve, and manage all waters of the State. The Commission's general fund Personal Services budget is not adequate to pay for these three positions. Past efforts to convert these special-funded personnel to general-funds failed. Future

pay raises, adjustments (e.g., reallocations and step movements), and fringe benefit rates for these positions require additional funding. The WRMF also funds one-third of a full-time position in the Department's Information Technology Office.

2. The WRMF funds critical Commission programs, activities, and priority projects, including: the Rainfall Extremes Study (to assess impacts of climate change on rainfall and drinking water availability), the 20-year Water Use Permit Review, Plant Water Use Estimates for Water Use Permitting, Modified RAM2 for Estimating Sustainable Yields, Implementation of Interim Instream Flow Standards in East Maui, and Surface water use permit processing in the Na Wai Eha (West Maui) proceedings.

3. Due to the limitations of Commission's general fund, the WRMF also funds advanced invoice payments for reimbursable federal grant projects and non-federal cost share obligations required under some federal grants. The uncertainty of grant opportunities requires that Commission funding be available in order to qualify for these federal grants. As part of the Program Review, the Commission funded a portion of its annual cooperative agreement with the United States Geological Survey through the WRMF funds to address the State's general fund shortfalls.

The WRMF funding enables the Commission to implement the State Water Code's requirements by funding personnel, program activities, and projects essential for water resource planning and the mandates of the State Water Code. The Commission has effectively utilized its WRMF to manage our most precious public trust resource.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2012  
2:30 P.M.  
ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 2250 HD1  
RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE

Chairpersons Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 2250 HD1. The purpose of this Act is to establish the emergency environmental workforce. The department respectfully provides comments.

In Section 10, \$1,000,000 is appropriated out of the pest inspection, quarantine, and eradication fund. Because of the economic downturn in 2009 and resulting shift of positions off of general funds, this special fund is currently funding 62 agriculture inspectors, entomologists, and technicians. The pest inspection, quarantine, and eradication fund is projected to go negative in 2013 unless some of the 62 positions are transferred back onto general funds. Because of the upcoming termination of 9 Kahului Airport inspectors and the loss of airline inspection fees, if this measure passes, the department will be faced with a reduction-in-force, which may likely lead to limiting port-of-entry clearances for agricultural commodities in neighbor island ports and/or further delays in inspection.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii



Human Resources Department

February 27, 2012

Testimony of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii  
**Conditional Support** of H. B. 2250, RELATING TO EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENT  
WORKFORCE

Before the House Committee on Finance  
Conference Room 308  
February 29, 2012

Committee Chair Marcus Oshiro, Vice Chair Marilyn Lee and Committee Members:

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) extends its **conditional support** of the intent of H. B. 2250 subject to the wording of this legislation.

The RCUH is prepared to assist the State to employ Hawaii residents economically displaced by our current economic crisis. The RCUH conditionally supports H. B. 2250 **subject to the following changes:**

1. Section 2. (1) and Section 3. (4) – Delete the words “employment contract”. These are not “contract” employees.
2. Section 2. (1) Revise to read: **“Employ as six-month employees approximately five hundred individuals (or as many individuals along with necessary logistical support) who were terminated from their jobs as a result of the local economic downturn.”** Logistical support will include but not limited to supplies, equipment, transportation, and other essential logistics necessary to train, equip and transport these individuals to and from fieldwork.
3. Section 3. (4) – Delete this entire section of text. The RCUH utilizes the services of the State Attorney General’s Office as its legal counsel. There will be no “employment contracts”. Revise to:

**“These employees will be subject to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii’s (RCUH) policies and procedures relating to employment; except for any applicable Unemployment Insurance benefits, which will be the responsibility of the State of Hawaii.**

**All procurement actions related to this program will be subject to the applicable RCUH policies.”**

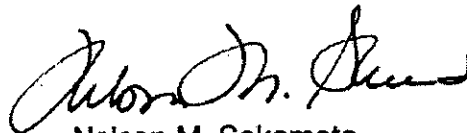
4. Delete the wording in Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 (“The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii; provided

that no moneys shall be expended without the prior approval of the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit.") this wording is inconsistent with our business practices.

The RCUH supports the intent of H. B. 2250. However, the RCUH's support will be withdrawn if H. B. 2250's funding results in diverting State funds away from current watershed protection and invasive species programs. These programs cannot afford to lose any State funding. Current watershed protection and invasive species programs already employ a number of RCUH employees. Diverting funds away from these programs could result in lay-offs of existing staff or severely impact these programs' ability to meet their mission objectives.

Therefore, the RCUH will only support H. B. 2250 if the changes we recommend are made to the legislation and current funding for watershed protection and invasive species programs are not diverted to finance H. B. 2250.

Thank you for considering our testimony.



Nelson M. Sakamoto  
Director of Human Resources

Testimony for FIN 2/29/2012 2:30:00 PM HB2250

Conference room: 308

Testifier position: Support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: David Duffy

Organization: Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit, U. Hawaii

E-mail: [dduffy@hawaii.edu](mailto:dduffy@hawaii.edu)

Submitted on: 2/28/2012

I would like to support HB 2250. It has the potential both to put a lot of people back to work and also to do great good for the environment.

After 9-11 in early 2002, the Legislature passed a bill setting up an Emergency Environmental Work Force. Working closely with the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii, The Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit of the University was able to hire several hundred people left unemployed by 9-11. They were put to work helping contain invasive species and dealing with the dengue outbreak. RCUH worked almost around the clock to hire people and we begged, borrowed and liberated equipment and vehicles so that our crews could get to their work sites. Many lacked proper field gear. But it was a time of sacrifice and we made do or went without. Interestingly more than a few went on into careers in natural resource management.

Now we have come a decade forward and another crisis grips our nation. We are not attacked from without by foreign enemies but from the failure of our own systems, leaving our economy weakened and many of our citizens out of work. It isn't a time to point fingers but it is a time to extend a hand and help our neighbors back on their feet. Perhaps it is time for another Emergency Environmental Work Force (EEWF).

The Work Force would be hosted by Invasive Species Committees (ISCs) and Watershed Partnerships (WPs) on each island. The ISCs and WPs have evolved a great deal in the last decade so they use sophisticated techniques like geographic information and global positioning systems to locate invasive species so they can be attacked. Both aerial and ground techniques have evolved to minimize both crews working in rough terrain and the use of herbicides. Safety clothing has evolved in the last decade so people come back in one piece. The bottom line is that the groups that will host the work force could use many more helping hands, but the Work Force will need to have the proper training and equipment. We can do this. It will take planning and coordination, It will also require that the WPs and



ISCs are operating at 100% capacity and are not facing cutbacks or we won't have the folks to instruct the Work Force. Work Force folks will end up with skills that could take them into new job.

The Work Force will be able to help improve the status of several of our watersheds. It could also help with the recurring spot infestations of Miconia and coqui frogs on Oahu and Kauai. On Molokai there are several species that could be surveyed for or removed, as well as helping with replanting in eroded areas. On Maui besides watershed work, the main remaining area of coqui could be removed, and the Hana core of Miconia further reduced. On Big Island, there are several problem species. On all the islands, there is the possibility of helping with fencing for program that have plans already well developed.

Above all the Work Force needs to work with the existing programs and extend them. It could have a significant multiplier effect. It could even potentially generate permanent jobs, spinning off permanent fencing companies if carefully nurtured. In any event this is a bill that has exciting possibilities and I am glad to support it.

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THE  
TRUST  
*for*  
PUBLIC  
LAND

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HAWAII

**THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND'S TESTIMONY  
IN OPPOSITION TO HB 2250 HD 1 RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY  
ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE  
House Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, February 29, 2012, 2:30 p.m., Room 308**

The Trust for Public Land's Hawaiian Islands Program opposes HB 2250 HD 1 relating to the emergency environmental workforce. While the bill appears to be well intentioned in its attempt to create "green jobs," the strategy of diverting needed funds from important and long-standing environmental programs and work is severely flawed.

The bill proposes to create a short-term environmental workforce by diverting monies from the special land and development fund, the forest and wildlife resources fund, the land conservation fund, the water resource management fund, the natural area reserve fund, the forest stewardship fund, the pest, inspection, quarantine and eradication fund, and the general fund. All of the special funds support important conservation work -- in many cases, the same kind of conservation work envisioned for the environmental workforce. The bill may have the unintended consequence of taking away desperately needed funding from trained staff who perform core conservation work and divert it to new short-term personnel who will need weeks, if not months of training, and who will likely leave conservation work when their six month contract is completed. In the meantime, the essential conservation work performed by the trained personnel in these existing programs will be un-funded or under-funded. Although the bill is intended to have positive conservation effects, the bill may in fact undermine the Department's long-term conservation efforts in the name of temporary job creation.

In addition, many of these programs receive significant matching federal or private funds -- funds that would be lost if the programs are cut. For example, the forest stewardship fund provides matching dollars to private landowners to perform the same types of conservation work that the environmental workforce may perform (e.g., fencing, invasive

species control, forest restoration). These landowners, using their own private monies or resources, receive matching state funds to employ workers to perform conservation work. The State benefits since forests are protected, and the same conservation work is accomplished at half or less than what it might normally cost to accomplish the same work leveraging private sources.

Likewise, the land conservation fund, known as the Legacy Land Conservation Program, has benefited from substantial federal, county, and private matching funds that would be lost without state funding. For example, the State's recent expansion of the Lapakahi State Historical Park in 2011 was funded by matching funds from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program (the #1 project in the nation competing among 57 projects) -- saving the State over \$1.1 million. Without the land conservation fund, opportunities like this one would be lost.

In short, the bill may result in many unintended consequences that would undermine rather than support Hawai'i's long-term conservation efforts.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify -

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lea Hong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the word "Hong".

Lea Hong  
Hawaiian Islands Program Director  
1136 Union Mall, Suite 202  
524-8563 (office), 783-3653 (cell)

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i  
Opposing H.B. 2250 HD1 Relating to the Emergency Environmental Workforce  
House Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, February 29, 2012, 2:30PM, Room 308

While we appreciate the intent of this measure, The Nature Conservancy opposes H.B. 2250 HD1 and the proposed creation of a short-term Emergency Environmental Workforce (EEWF). Our main concern is that the skeleton crews currently remaining in the DLNR, the HDOA, Watershed Partnerships, and Invasive Species Committees are supported in part by the special funds identified in this bill. Although there is a lot of environmental work that could be done by 500-700 people, redirecting these funds would mean that trained, on-the-job staff could be laid off and replaced by temporary workers.

The existing environmental and invasive species programs, and their funding sources that this bill targets, have suffered severe cutbacks in recent years. The Island Invasive Species Committees (ISCs) [www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/iscs/](http://www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/iscs/), Watershed Partnerships (WPs) [www.hawwp.org](http://www.hawwp.org), the DLNR Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) and Forest Reserve (FR) programs <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw>, and the HDOA Plant Quarantine program <http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/pi/pq> have experienced a reduction of 50-60% in their State funding in recent years. They have had to lay off staff and cut back on the services they provide for the benefit of all island residents. If the EEWF proposed in this bill goes forward, the WPs, ISCs, DLNR, and HDOA programs will not likely be able to effectively take on, train, equip, transport, and manage large numbers of new personnel.

We recommend that if funding is available from the special funds identified in this bill, that it be used to shore up our existing environmental workforce in DLNR, HDOA, Watershed Partnerships, and Invasive Species Committees for their existing effective programs and projects (including employing personnel and contracting private businesses) in ways that will have a more lasting effect.

While we appreciate the intent of this bill to try to create some employment opportunities and address important environmental issues, we don't believe it will have much lasting benefits for either the temporary employees or for the environment. If actually available, we think that the \$11,350,000 identified in this bill would be much better invested directly in the existing and proven environmental programs at the DLNR, HDOA, Watershed Partnerships, and Invasive Species Committees.

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House of Representatives  
Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, February 29, 2012  
2:30 p.m., Conference Room 308  
State Capitol

### Testimony Commenting on HB 2250 HD1

Aloha Chair Oshiro, and Member of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **would like to provide comments on HB 2250 HD1**, *Relating to the emergency environmental workforce*, which establishes the Emergency Environmental Workforce and appropriates funds.

As one of the PCSU employees that helped implement the 2001-2002 EEWF, I saw firsthand the amount of work that can get done with an additional 200 people for a year. I also saw some of the logistical problems of the program, which need to be addressed for HB 2250 to be successful.

First, the immediate hiring of so many new employees at once did not allow agencies and NGOs to prepare. The crews were hired and waiting for equipment and leased trucks. A staggered hiring date might help.

Second, existing staff had to become trainers and supervisors of new staff, with no ability to compensate for their additional duties. After several years of budget cuts, many of the agencies and NGOs do not have the number of staff or budget available to support large numbers of new staff. Instead of mandating the hiring of 500-700 staff, it might be beneficial to request from agencies/NGOs the number of new staff they would be able to take on.

Third, some agencies/NGOs opted to employ staff in "make work projects" (due to the difficulty in moving people to different locations), which did little to help the environment. In addition, 6-months is a very short time to try to make a meaningful and lasting impact on invasive species. To make the most of any additional funds and staff, it might make sense to extend the program to 1 year contracts, request project proposals that are meaningful and that have good measures of effectiveness.

One final comment is that the bill proposes using funds that are already in use supporting invasive species prevention and control work. We are opposed to the redirection of these funds.

Although we support the idea of the EEWF and greatly appreciate the effort to add capacity for environmental work, the difficulty of interviewing, hiring, hosting, outfitting, training, transporting, and maintaining staff for only a 6-month work period makes this program less efficient than if the funds were provided directly to these groups to re-build capacity. Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,  
Christy Martin  
Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS)  
Ph: (808) 722-0995



Testimony of the Oahu Invasive Species Committee  
Commenting on HB 2250 Relating to the Emergency Environmental Workforce  
House Committee on Finance  
February 29, 2012, 2:30 PM Room 308

The O'ahu Invasive Species Committee offers the following comments on HB 2250, Relating to the Emergency Environmental Workforce. OISC appreciates the efforts of the legislature to provide the unemployed with income while protecting Hawai'i's unique natural heritage and precious resources. We are concerned however, that the implementation of an Emergency Environmental Workforce will result in layoffs at OISC and the other organizations that depend on the Natural Area Reserve fund. HB 2250 appears to drain funds from a number of sources that already support conservation work such as the Natural Area Reserve fund. Without these funds, successful programs will be scrapped.

OISC employs twelve people and we must continually seek funds to support our operations. Our funds have been cut by 65% over the past few years and keeping everyone employed is an annual challenge. The benefits of an Emergency Environmental Workforce will be negated if funds are not available to support the employees implementing good projects right now.

OISC field crew are trained in plant identification, data collection, safe pesticide use, navigation and hiking in steep terrain. These are all skills that can be learned, but it does take time. Our already trained and experienced staff would have to stop doing surveys in order to train the temporary workforce. Our miconia eradication program—which is already stretched thin—would then fall further behind.

Miconia seeds can last in the soil up to 16 years. Therefore sustainable funding is essential if we are to achieve eradication. We respectfully suggest that a higher return on investment could be made by supporting the efforts of the invasive species committees, watershed partnerships, DLNR and HDOA to employ long-term staff. This would create jobs while making meaningful progress towards conservation goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



# MISC

**MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE**

Testimony of the Maui Invasive Species Committee  
Commenting on House Bill 2250 HD1  
Relating to Emergency Environmental Workforce  
Before the House Committee on Finance  
Conference Room 308

February 29, 2012, 2:30PM

H.B. 2250 HD1 would create a short-term environmental workforce, with the dual purpose of providing much-needed employment opportunities while also addressing environmental threats. MISC has the following comments.

The sources of funding identified to implement this measure (e.g., Natural Area Reserve Fund, Legacy Land Fund) currently provide essential support for ongoing environmental protection activities within the State, including funding for Watershed Partnerships (WPs) and Invasive Species Committees (ISCs), and acquisition of important conservation lands. During the economic downturn, state funding for the WPs and ISCs was decreased by 60% and has yet to be restored. Funding for the Legacy Land Commission has been used over the last several years to prevent further cutbacks to invasive species work. If this measure directs funds away from existing programs, the benefit of short-term positions could come at significant cost to current, functioning programs. Since these programs would likely be the very ones tapped to train and manage the temporary positions, the bill should be amended to allow funds to also be used for the retention or addition of longer-term positions within the Watershed Partnerships and Invasive Species Committees.

There is no doubt that the job of protecting our watersheds, economy, and quality of life from invasive species could benefit from additional labor. However, the ability to achieve meaningful results requires support for more than just physical labor. Depending on the particular situation, funds will be needed for transportation, herbicides, safety gear, fencing, helicopter time, etc. Projects will need flexibility to use funding for ancillary aspects of project management. The measure should be amended to ensure that a large labor force isn't created without adequate support to actually accomplish meaningful work.

Thank you for your consideration and for your kōkua.



# Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 29, 2012, 2:30 P.M.  
(Testimony is 1 pages long)

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE INTENT OF HB 2250 (HD1)

Aloha Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Chapter of the Sierra Club, with 10,000 members and supporters, *supports the intent* of HB 2250 (HD1), which would fund an emergency environmental workforce by raiding DLNR's current source of funds.

We support the intent of this bill. Both the environment and economy could use a boost that this bill would represent.

Nevertheless, the Sierra Club strongly opposes reducing the funding of several important DLNR programs simply to fund this bill. The State of Hawaii currently funds natural resource protection less per capita than just about any other state. Robbing from Peter to pay Paul does not help protect Hawaii's fragile environment, nor would it necessarily result in an increase in jobs as current staff would be laid off.

Instead, this Committee should look at alternate sources of funding. For example, this Committee has yet to hear HB 2260, which could bring in millions of funding for natural resource protection.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.





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**HB 2250 HD1  
RELATING TO EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE**

**PAUL T. OSHIRO  
MANAGER – GOVERNMENT RELATIONS  
ALEXANDER & BALDWIN, INC.**

**FEBRUARY 29, 2012**

Chair Oshiro and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am Paul Oshiro, testifying on behalf of Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. (A&B) and its agricultural company Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company on HB 2250 HD1, "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE." We support the general intent of this bill to provide additional funding to maintain and to protect the State's watersheds.

Hawaii's eleven watershed partnerships provide the general framework for large-scale watershed protection. These voluntary alliances of public and private landowners and managers cooperatively work together to protect over two million acres of forests that supply hundreds of millions of gallons of fresh water in Hawaii every year. Working across ownership boundaries, these partnerships leverage State efforts, pool funding, and provide a diverse range of local employment opportunities. Alexander & Baldwin is an active participant in three of Hawaii's watershed partnerships, the East Maui Watershed Partnership, West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership, and the Kauai Watershed Alliance.

We support the general intent of this bill as it provides additional funding to maintain and to protect our valuable watersheds. In addition to being a primary source

of our fresh water, Hawaii's watersheds also provide several other benefits. Without a healthy watershed to anchor the soil and temper the erosion from heavy rain, large amounts of sediment would wash off the mountain slopes and into the ocean.

Watersheds also absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide, reducing Hawaii's greenhouse gas emissions. These watershed resources are integral in providing much needed water to sustain our island community into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Kohala Watershed Partnership (KWP) **strongly opposes HB2250**, a bill to create an emergency environmental workforce, for the following reasons:

1. The funding for employing these temporary workers would come from existing funds that support the Invasive Species Committees, Watershed Partnerships and other trained conservation professionals. Our staff are certified in working with firearms, chainsaws, pesticides, and helicopters, to name a few. The point of the bill is to augment the work of our organizations, however, if our existing programs and trained staff positions are not funded through the current means, there is no one to hire, train and oversee the work of these temporary workers.
2. KWP received an ARRA stimulus grant for \$2.9 M dollars for an 18-month watershed restoration project in the summer of 2009. Within six weeks of receiving the funding, we hired 15 new employees, only three of whom had relevant job experience. The other 12 employees needed to be trained by our existing staff. Over the course of the first six months, we lost 8 of these employees due to them quitting, or being terminated for cause. We spent a large amount of our time handling these personnel matters, training, evaluating, and overseeing the work of these untrained new employees while working to meet our project objectives. It took a year to get a full staff of 15 employees trained and working to capacity. To attempt such an endeavor with even more untrained employees over a shorter, six month time period would be impossible.
3. The work that the crew of KWP does is not suitable for the everyday unemployed worker. We work in harsh environmental conditions, from sun, dust and blasting wind, to cold, wet and muddy. We carry loads of up to 50 pounds, and handle firearms, pesticides, and power tools. Our crews are trained to work with helicopters, and must handle sling loads. We have found in our hiring over the past four years, that very few local workers have the physical condition or inclination to work under these conditions, even those that "really need a job." Better to focus on quality rather than quantity in increasing the environmental work force in Hawaii.
4. KWP works with the Kohala Center, an award-winning local non-profit whose mandate is to increase education and job opportunities on our island by working to conserve our natural resources. By limiting the hiring for these 500-750 position only through the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii, a large, Oahu-based bureaucratically-heavy State institution, we are not supporting local environmental non-profits that have the flexibility to act quickly, work locally, and match those State dollars with private and Federal funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony relevant to this bill.

Melora K. Purell, Coordinator  
Kohala Watershed Partnership

Testimony of Keren Gundersen  
Commenting on H.B. 2250 HD1 Relating to the Emergency Environmental Workforce  
House Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, February 29, 2012, 2:30PM, Room 308

Aloha,

While I generally support the use of unused funds from various state projects for environmental work to protect watersheds and battle invasive species, I have serious reservations regarding several items:

1. The over-estimation of the possible workforce that can be hired on these funds due to an under-estimation of the costs associated with hiring a workforce of this type.
2. Funding new and temporary workers while current funding for ongoing full-time employees in conservation are at risk of losing funding (no steady or significant source of annual funding for the island invasive species committees). Although there is a lot of environmental work that could be done by 500-700 people, redirecting these funds would mean that trained, on-the-job staff could be laid off and replaced by temporary workers.
3. This funding should be available to fund current conservation employees as field oversight and direction will be needed for new temporary crews.
4. Due to the temporary nature of this employment, there is a possibility of not meeting future monitoring and follow-up-needs with limited existing staff.

If this bill does pass, in my capacity of Project Manager for the Kauai Invasive Species Committee (KISC), I could anticipate that we could utilize up to 12 temporary hires, *provided* that KISC is funded to keep existing employees to help provide training and oversight for the new crew, and adequate funding would be provided for gear, supplies, and equipment.

For every 5 employees that are added to a crew, a new vehicle would have to be obtained. Procuring and licensing additional vehicles for our projects has sometimes takes up to 6 months. For every employee, a minimum of \$2,000 is needed for gear and other miscellaneous personal equipment. To cover the expenses of additional field work, supplies are needed such as herbicide, sprayers, hand-tools, fuel, GPS units, etc. Field-related expenses would depend on the type of work being done. KISC works on miconia, little fire ants, coqui frogs, and other invasive species.

I would like to recommend that if funding is available from the special funds identified in this bill, that it be used to shore up our existing, and highly trained environmental workforce.

Sincerely,

Keren Gundersen

# Hawaiian Island Land Trust

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Feb. 27, 2012

TO: Representative Markus R. Oshiro, Chair  
Committee on Finance

## RE: Testimony in opposition to HB2250

I am providing this testimony in strong opposition to HB 2250 which would remove the majority of funding from the Legacy Lands Conservation Fund for a temporary Emergency Environmental Workforce.

The existing environmental and invasive species programs, and their funding sources that this bill targets, have suffered severe cutbacks in recent years. The Island Invasive Species Committees (ISCs) [www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/iscs/](http://www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/iscs/), Watershed Partnerships (WPs) [www.hawp.org](http://www.hawp.org), the DLNR Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) and Forest Reserve (FR) programs <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw>, and the HDOA Plant Quarantine program <http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/pi/pq> have experienced a reduction of 50-60% in their State funding in recent years. They have had to lay off staff and cut back on the services they provide for the benefit of all island residents. If the EEWf proposed in this bill goes forward, the WPs, ISCs, DLNR, and HDOA programs will not likely be able to effectively take on, train, equip, transport, and manage large numbers of new personnel.

We recommend that if funding is available from the special funds identified in this bill, that it be used to shore up our existing environmental workforce in DLNR, HDOA, Watershed Partnerships, and Invasive Species Committees for their existing effective programs and projects (including employing personnel and contracting private businesses) in ways that will have a more lasting effect.

While we appreciate the intent of this bill to try to create some employment opportunities and address important environmental issues, we don't believe it will have much lasting benefits for either the temporary employees or for the environment. If actually available, we think that the \$11,350,000 identified in this bill would be much better invested directly in the existing and proven environmental programs at the DLNR, HDOA, Watershed Partnerships, and Invasive Species Committees.

Please do not approve HB 2250

Sincerely,

Dale B. Bonar, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

## **FINTestimony**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**ent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2012 10:16 AM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** rtb@hawaii.rr.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB2250 on 2/29/2012 2:30:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 2/29/2012 2:30:00 PM HB2250

Conference room: 308  
Testifier position: Oppose  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Randal T Bartlett  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [rtb@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:rtb@hawaii.rr.com)  
Submitted on: 2/28/2012

### Comments:

Aloha kakou, Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee & FIN Committee Members:

As an `O`ahu-born kama`aina and conservation professional on Maui for nearly 25 years, I ask that you oppose HB 2250, HD1 Relating to Environmental Protection.

Hawaii's forested watersheds are increasingly threatened by losses of our endangered native biodiversity and watershed capacity by invasive species when demand for both potable and agricultural water is at an all-time high and projected to grow in-step with our population.

However, while good-intentioned, HB 2250 threatens the sustainability of existing programs with proven track records by diverting already scarce funding for a temporary work-force of untrained laborers that will require additional resources to properly train, equip, transport (vehicles, fuel) and supervise to the detriment of existing programs.

Increasing funding for existing programs at HDLNR-DOFAW, HDOA-Plant Quarantine, Watershed Partnerships ([www.hawp.org](http://www.hawp.org)) and Invasive Species Committees ([www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/iscs/](http://www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/iscs/)) statewide is critically needed to protect the watersheds which provide our water supplies for current and future generations of residents and visitors alike. But a short-term Emergency Environmental Workforce will actually create more problems and waste tax-payer dollars at a time when more efficient programs already existing struggle to protect our watershed resources with less funding than ever.

`Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka `Aina I Ka Pono!!!

Mahalo nui loa no kou kokua,

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