

HB2250 HD2

RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE.

Establishes a special operations team that is authorized to assemble temporary emergency environmental workforce employees to respond to environmental emergencies. (Proposed SD1)

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 Senate Committees on
WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING
and
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
and
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Tuesday, April 3, 2012
2:40 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2250, HOUSE DRAFT 2, PROPOSED SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE.**

House Bill 2250, House Draft 2, Proposed Senate Draft 1, proposes to establish a special operations team authorized to recruit a temporary workforce to respond to environmental emergencies. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill.

Hawaii's unique environment and natural resources continue to face ongoing threats, and in many cases these threats constitute imminent peril to natural resources and watersheds and thus require rapid response. If responded to immediately, threats such as invasive species can be mitigated and costs for control and eradication can be reduced.

Establishing a state-wide multi-agency special operations team responsible for responding to environmental emergencies by recruiting a qualified workforce to undertake response actions would enable a coordinated and swift reaction to threats that, if left unchecked, could cause vast environmental and economic damage. The Department encourages that the special operation team also work with the existing Invasive Species Committees and Watersheds Partnerships in response to environmental emergencies.

For the abovementioned reasons the Department supports House Bill 2250, House Draft 2, Proposed Senate Draft 1.

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
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
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STATE PARKS

THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

**THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND'S TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF HB 2250 PROPOSED SD 1 RELATING TO THE
EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE**

**Senate Committees on Water, Land & Housing,
Energy & Environment, and Ways & Means
Tuesday, April 3, 2012, 2:40 p.m., Room 308**

The Trust for Public Land's Hawaiian Islands Program previously opposed HB 2250 HD 2 for the reasons stated in our prior testimony, but now supports the proposed SD 1. While HD2 was well intentioned in its attempt to create "green jobs," its strategy of diverting needed funds from important and long-standing environmental programs and work was flawed. We appreciate the proposed changes in SD1.

HB 2250, HD2 previously proposed 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. The Trust for Public Land opposed HD2 because those special funds support important and ongoing conservation work -- in many cases, the same kind of conservation work envisioned for the environmental work force. We pointed out that HD2 could have had the unintended consequence of taking away desperately needed funding from trained staff who perform core conservation work and diverting it to new short-term personnel who would need weeks, if not months of training, and who would likely leave conservation work when their six month contract is complete. In the meantime, the essential conservation work performed by the trained personnel in the existing programs would be un-funded or under-funded. Although HD2 was intended to result in positive conservation effects, HD2 could have undermined the Department's long-term conservation efforts in the name of temporary job creation.

The Trust for Public Land also opposed HD2 because it inadvertently reduced the State's ability to leverage matching private and federal funds for conservation work. Many of the programs funded by the targeted special funds receive significant matching federal or private funds -- funds that would be lost if the programs were 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 would have performed (e.g., fencing, invasive species control, forest restoration). These landowners, using their own private monies or resources, leverage matching state funds to employ workers or their own sweat equity 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 leveraging private resources.

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 forever.

The Trust for Public Land supports the changes in SD 1 deleting the provisions that would have diverted important funding from existing core conservation programs and work. The Trust for Public Land supports an appropriation of general funds for the environmental work force if such funding can be found without detriment to other key programs.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify -

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lea Hong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end.

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

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii



Human Resources Department

April 2, 2012

Testimony of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii

Conditional Support of

**H. B. 2250, HD2, PROPOSED SD1, RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL
WORKFORCE, RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE**

Before the Senate Committees on:
Water, Land, and Housing
Energy and Environment
Ways and Means

Conference Room 225
APRIL 3, 2012

Committee Chairs: Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Mike Gabbard, David Y. Ige
Committee Vice Chairs: Malama Solomon, J. Kalani English, Michelle Kidani
and Committee Members:

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) **extends its conditional support of H. B. 2250, HD2, PROPOSED SD1 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, HD2, PROPOSED SD1 subject to:**

1. No subsequent language will be inserted to refer to these employees as "contract" employees. There will be no "employment contracts". The RCUH does not employ "contract employees". Any language inserted into this bill that defines who these employees are, should follow:

"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.

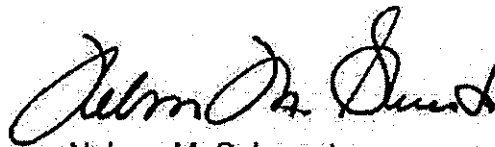
2. The RCUH is self-insured for its Unemployment Insurance benefits. Therefore, any short-term employment program will have a detrimental impact on the RCUH's Unemployment Insurance reserve. Therefore, the State must be responsible for any unemployment insurance liability or appropriate sufficient funds to cover the anticipated unemployment insurance liability for any displaced workers once this program ends.

3. Any funds appropriated for this bill will include sufficient funds for logistical support. This 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.
4. The RCUH retains its legal services through the State Attorney General's Office.
5. All procurement actions related to this program will be subject to the applicable RCUH policies. All sums appropriated shall be expended consistent with the policies of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii.

The RCUH supports the intent of H. B. 2250, HD2, PROPOSED SD1. However, the RCUH's support will be withdrawn if H. B. 2250, HD2, PROPOSED SD1'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, HD2, PROPOSED SD1 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, HD2, PROPOSED SD1.

Thank you for considering our testimony.



Nelson M. Sakamoto
Director of Human Resources

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Commenting on H.B. 2250 Proposed SD1 Relating to the Emergency Environmental Workforce
Senate Committee on Water, Land and Housing
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 3, 2012, 2:40PM, Room 225

We appreciate the intent of this measure to set up a mechanism for creating and funding a short-term Emergency Environmental Workforce (EEWF) in the event of an environmental emergency.

We recommend that the Legislature also ensure that our existing environmental workforce of DLNR, DOA, DOH, Invasive Species Committee, and Watershed Partnership programs are also healthy, well-staffed and reasonably funded. These existing programs are the foundation of our state's environmental protection and natural resource management efforts; they are the current first-responders to environmental emergencies; and, they will likely be the ones called upon to train and supervise any temporary emergency workforce.

The existing environmental and invasive species programs have suffered severe cutbacks in recent years. The Island Invasive Species Committees (ISCs) www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org/iscs/, Watershed Partnerships (WPs) www.hawp.org, the DLNR Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) and Forest Reserve (FR) programs <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw>, the HDOA Plant Quarantine program <http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/pi/pq>, and the DOH Vector Control Branch <http://hawaii.gov/health/environmental/vector/index.html> have experienced major cuts—50-60% in some cases—to their State funding. They have had to lay off staff and cut back on the services they provide for the benefit of all island residents. If the emergency workforce proposed in this bill is ever called up, the ISCs, WPs, DLNR, HDOA, and DOH programs need to have the capacity to effectively take on, train, equip, transport, and manage these temporary workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments.

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The Senate
Committee on Water, Land, and Housing
Committee on Energy and Environment
Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 3, 2012
2:40 p.m., Conference Room 225
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of Proposed HB 2250 HD2 SD1

Aloha Chairs Dela Cruz, Gabbard, and Ige, and Member of the Committees,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **supports the proposed HB 2250 HD2 SD1**, *Relating to the emergency environmental workforce*, which establishes a special operations team that is authorized to assemble temporary emergency environmental workforce employees to respond to environmental emergencies.

As one of the PCSU employees that helped implement the 2001-2002 EEWf, I saw firsthand the emergency response to the dengue fever outbreak in Hana using 33 out-of-work community members to remove mosquito-breeding habitat around houses. This was one of the best EEWf projects, one that had clearly defined duties and measures of efficacy. As drafted, the proposed HB 2250 HD2 SD1 would similarly provide agencies and NGOs with helping hands when a clearly defined job and outcome are identified.

As such, the most important part of this proposed draft is the establishment of a special operations team of DLNR, HDOA, HDOH, and county mayors to identify emergency environmental needs. The leadership of these entities is vital in identifying and prioritizing environmental projects that could benefit from temporary staff, projects that make a real and lasting difference.

CGAPS supports the proposed HB2250 HD2 SD1 with the establishment of a special operations team and General Funds to support the EEWf, and we greatly appreciate legislators' efforts to add capacity for environmental work. Mahalo for your consideration.

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



MISC

MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE

Testimony of the Maui Invasive Species Committee
Commenting on House Bill 2250 HD2
Relating to Emergency Environmental Workforce
Before the Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Housing
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Conference Room 225
April 3, 2012, 2:40PM

H.B. 2250 HD2 would create a short-term environmental workforce, with the dual purpose of providing much-needed employment opportunities while also addressing environmental threats. Of considerable concern is the fact that 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. Another funding source that would be tapped for the environmental workforce supports pest inspection and quarantine work by the Department of Agriculture, even though current staffing levels for agricultural inspectors are inadequate.

During the economic downturn, state funding for the WPs and ISCs 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, if passed, the bill should be amended to also support 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.

Teya M. Penniman
Manager

**Testimony of The Hawai'i Green Growth Initiative
Commenting on HB 2250 Proposed SD1 Relating to the Emergency
Environmental Workforce**

**Senate Committee on Water Land and Housing
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Public Hearing on 3 April 2012, 2:40pm
Conference Room 225

Audrey Newman
Hawaii Green Growth Initiative
P.O. Box 535, Hoolehua, Hawai'i 96729

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Gabbard, Chair Ige, and Members of the
Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Hawaii Green Growth Initiative (HGG). HGG appreciates the intent of this measure to set up a mechanism for creating and funding a short-term Emergency Environmental Workforce (EEWF) in the event of an environmental emergency.

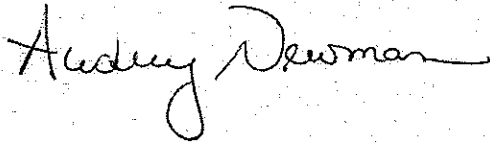
HGG brings leaders from the energy, food and environmental sectors together to achieve Hawaii's sustainability goals and to be a model for building a green economy. Our members and advisors include more than 50 leaders from government, private, and non-profit organizations in Hawai'i.

HGG recommends that the Legislature also ensure that our existing environmental workforce of DLNR, DOA, DOH, Invasive Species Committee, and Watershed Partnership programs are also healthy, well-staffed and reasonably funded. These existing programs are the foundation of our state's environmental protection and natural resource management efforts; they are the current first-responders to environmental emergencies; and, they will likely be the ones called upon to train and supervise any temporary emergency workforce.

The existing environmental and invasive species programs have suffered severe cutbacks in recent years. The Island Invasive Species Committees (ISCs), Watershed Partnerships (WPs), the DLNR Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) and Forest Reserve (FR) programs, the HDOA Plant Quarantine program, and the DOH Vector Control Branch have experienced major cuts -50-60% in some cases- to their state funding.

HGG recognizes the value of creating new "green jobs" and the critical importance of increasing the workforce for watershed and invasive species management. If the emergency workforce proposed in this bill is ever called up, the ISCs, WPs, DLNR, HDOA, and DOH programs need to have the capacity to effectively take on, train, equip, transport, and manage these temporary workers.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey Newman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping tail.

Audrey Newman
Senior Advisor, Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)
Promoting action for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods.
www.glispa.org

Dane Wicker

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, April 02, 2012 7:38 AM
To: WLH Testimony
Cc: nsakamoto@rcuh.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2250 on 4/3/2012 2:40:00 PM

Testimony for WLH/ENE/WAM 4/3/2012 2:40:00 PM HB2250

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Nelson Sakamoto
Organization: Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii
E-mail: nsakamoto@rcuh.com
Submitted on: 4/2/2012

Comments:

April 2, 2012

Sarah McLane
Founder/Consultant
The Makali'i Group
535 Kahua Place
Paia, Hawaii 96779

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

House Bill 2250, House Draft 1, although with good intentions, could equally hinder both environmental protection in Hawaii and the perpetuity of our conservation workforce. I respectfully oppose this bill in its current form because it takes money from funds that support successful, already functioning projects to begin a new workforce to continue working on these types of projects. One issue that may or may not have been considered is the capability of any organization to take on that many temporary workers without increasing their operational capacity (or actually diminishing it due to cuts that are being proposed by this bill). I have worked with many of the Maui-based conservation organizations and an increase in staff (even temporarily) of more than 5 people would need new transportation methods, new camping gear and equipment to safely outfit these people, new machines and tools to do the work, training time for these staff (most conservation orgs REQUIRE helicopter safety training, CPR/First Aid, Ropes/Rapelling, chainsaw safety etc. for all of their staff), and an administrative or field crew leader setup that could manage these new employees. Temporary employees are great for small projects that need to get completed within a certain deadline, but it should be up to the individual organizations as to whether or not they could sustain the additional burden that a temporary employee presents – the extra time and costs that get invested in this person, only to have that knowledge leave in 6 months.

Another issue with this bill is the cuts in the funding for conservation organizations. If anything we should be increasing funds to the already thriving, solid organizations so that they can hire more full-time, salaried employees that could be getting health benefits and be a productive part of our communities. It seems contrary to the ideal of this bill to cut funding from a successful organization only to end up forcing them to take on temporary workers (which because of cuts in funding) they can't support through their own structure and administration.

Please re-consider the scope of this bill – if the goal is to increase the number of jobs available in conservation, GIVE more money to the conservation organizations so we can create more long-term viable jobs for these people. I'm sure you could ask anyone out of work that given the chance they would much rather have a full-time job than one that ends in 6 months.

Thank you for the consideration!

Respectfully,

Sarah E McLane
808-268-6680