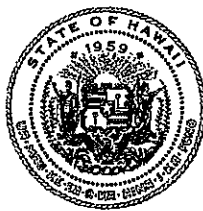


NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR
Chairperson

Before the House Committees on
WATER LAND & OCEAN RESOURCES
and
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Friday, February 10, 2012
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2250
RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE.

House Bill 2250 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 consequences and thus respectfully opposes this bill.

House Bill 2250 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 the Department to the Research Cooperation of the University of Hawaii for Fiscal Year 2012-2013. Appropriating funds away from already established and successful departmental programs could have myriad opportunity costs and negative consequences including conflicts with encumbered contracts, compromising the Department's ability to maintain already effective projects, and could potentially result in reduction of currently employed special-funded Department staff – all of which contradict the intent of this bill.

House Bill 2250 proposes to appropriate out of the Land Conservation Fund the sum of \$2,250,000, which would effectively suspend the operation of the Legacy Land Conservation Program which is successfully protecting watersheds and other natural, cultural, and agricultural resources. These resources provide important public benefits including conservation of forests

and watersheds for fresh water supply, protection of agricultural lands for food security and agribusiness, and preservation of the unique scenic vistas and recreational resources that support the tourism sector.

House Bill 2250 proposes to appropriate out of the Natural Area Reserve Fund the sum of \$1,400,000, which currently supports several vital resource protection programs including the Watershed Partnership Program, Natural Area Partnership and Forest Stewardship Program, Youth Conservation Corps, the management of Natural Area Reserves and Forest Reserves, Invasive Species Councils, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

House Bill 2250 proposes to appropriate \$500,000 out of the Forest and Wildlife Resources Fund, which supports recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species and early detection of harmful invasive species. In addition, this bill would appropriate \$500,000 out of the Forest Stewardship Fund which supports the Forest Reserve System that hosts 640,000 acres of the State's most important watersheds, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program that promotes native forest restoration and conservation on degraded agricultural lands, the State Forest Stewardship Program and its Statewide Advisory Council which provides forest management planning and funding for private landowners interested in long term forest stewardship.

House Bill 2250 proposes to appropriate \$1,400,000 out of the Special Land and Development Fund (SLDF), which is a critical funding source for the Department's ability to deal with emergency response to natural catastrophe such as fire, rock-fall, flood, earthquake, and hazard investigation and mitigation. The SLDF is vital for operations of the Engineering Division by funding the Mineral Resources/Geothermal Program to manage the geothermal resource to protect public health and safety and to ensure its continued viability for the future, the Dam Safety/Flood Control Program to regulate dams and reservoirs to protect life and property, the National Flood Control Program to ensure the availability of flood insurance to property owners, and the Land Maintenance Crew to manage and maintain various State-owned lands. The SLDF is also essential for operations of the Division of State Parks, which has received funds from the SLDF to make up for consistent general fund budget shortfalls for operation that keep our parks open.

In addition, the Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL) has been entirely funded by the SLDF. OCCL is the State's zoning authority for all Conservation District lands, including terrestrial lands, marine areas out to three miles, and fast and submerged lands. The loss of this government function would essentially result in the loss of projects within the Conservation District because there would not be staff to process regulatory permits pursuant to Chapter 183C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which would have major impacts to business, private landowners, government agencies, the university, and marine users.

House Bill 2250 proposes to appropriate \$300,000 out of the Water Resource Management Fund (WRMF) which supports the State Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) efforts to manage our precious public trust resource. The WRMF is used to fund Commission programs including the Rainfall Extremes Study to assess impacts of climate change on rainfall and drinking water availability, 20-year water use permit review, estimating plant water use for water use permitting, implementation of interim in-stream flow standards in East Maui, and processing of surface water use permits in West Maui.

House Bill 2250 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.



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Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Opposing H.B. 2250 Relating to the Emergency Environmental Workforce
House Committee on Water, Land and Ocean Resources
House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
Friday, February 10, 2012, 9:00AM, Room 325

While we appreciate the intent of this measure, The Nature Conservancy opposes H.B. 2250 and the proposed creation of a short-term Emergency Environmental Workforce (EEWF). Our main concern is that the skeleton crews remaining in DLNR, Watershed Partnerships, HDOA, and Invasive Species Committees are supported in part by these special funds. 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/, Watershed Partnerships (WPs) 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/pg> 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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COORDINATING GROUP ON
ALIEN PEST SPECIES

House of Representatives
Committee on Water, Land, & Ocean Resources
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Friday, February 10, 2012
9:00 a.m., Conference Room 325
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of the Intent of HB 2250

Aloha Chairs Chang and Coffman, and Members of the Committees,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **supports the intent of HB 2250, 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 EEWF, I saw firsthand the amount of work that can get done when 90 people move through a miconia forest. Sadly, I can also say that the miconia they removed near Onomea has returned and is producing seeds. This was not an eradication project, as these workers were put to work in the middle of the biggest infested site in the state, with thousands of acres of miconia plants and a huge seed bank with seeds that are viable for 16 years. If they could have moved 20 five-person crews to the periphery of the infestation, they could have bought a few years time for the watershed, but they only had a year to spend the money and only two buses to move people, so they were limited as to what they could do. I fear that adding 500-700 workers at once will result in a similar situation without a lasting impact on the environment.

HDOA, the Invasive Species Committees, Watershed Partnerships, and DLNR are also at a disadvantage, with greatly reduced capacity to implement this program. Although I support the idea of the EEWF and greatly appreciate the effort to add capacity for environmental work, the difficulty of agencies and NGOs in 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)
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**HB 2250
RELATING TO EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE**

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

FEBRUARY 10, 2012

Chair Chang, Chair Coffman, and Members of the House Committees on Water, Land & Ocean Resources and Energy & Environmental Protection:

I am Paul Oshiro, testifying on behalf of Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. (A&B) and its agricultural company Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company on HB 2250, "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE." We support this bill.

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.

Based on the aforementioned, we respectfully request your favorable consideration on this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii



Human Resources Department

February 8, 2012
DP020801.NS2

Testimony of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii
Supporting H. B. 2250, RELATING TO EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENT WORKFORCE
Before the House Committees on Energy and Environment & Water, Land & Ocean Resources
Conference Room 325
February 10, 2012

Committee Chairs Denny Coffman and Jerry L. Chang and Committee Members:

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) supports the intent of H. B. 2250 with recommended changes.

Act 004 of the Third Session of the 2001 Hawaii State Legislature established the Emergency Environmental Workforce (EEWF). The Act provided funding for the RCUH to employ Hawaii residents economically displaced by the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The RCUH in collaboration with the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU) of the University of Hawaii, numerous private organizations, and government agencies (federal, state, and county) employed 225 individuals. These RCUH employees augmented existing programs combating the State's serious environmental problems relating to invasive species.

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

1. Section 2. (1) and Section 3. (4) – Delete the word "contract". These are not "contract" employees.
2. 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". Replace wording with:

"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 coverage 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."

3. Delete the last paragraph in Section 6 this is inconsistent with our business practices.

Thank you for considering our testimony in support of H. B. 2250, with changes.

Nelson M. Sakamoto
Director of Human Resources