

# SB2062

Measure Title: RELATING TO CONSERVATION.  
Report Title: Natural Area Reserve Fund; Watershed Protection; Appropriation (\$)  
Description: Appropriates funds to the natural area reserve fund for watershed protection.  
Companion:  
Package: None  
Current Referral: WTL/ENE, WAM  
Introducer(s): CHUN OAKLAND, ESPERO, GABBARD, RUDERMAN, Baker, L. Thielen, Wakai

<u>Sort by Date</u>		Status Text
1/13/2014	S	Pending Introduction.
1/15/2014	S	Introduced.
1/15/2014	S	Passed First Reading.
1/15/2014	S	Referred to WTL/ENE, WAM.
1/29/2014	S	The committee(s) on WTL/ENE has scheduled a public hearing on 02-06-14 2:45PM in conference room 225.

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 AND LAND  
and  
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Thursday, February 6, 2014  
2:45 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2062  
RELATING TO CONSERVATION**

Senate Bill 2062 proposes to appropriate funds to the Natural Area Reserve Fund for watershed protection. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill provided that the funds appropriated do not adversely impact the Department's priorities in the Executive Budget.**

Funding would support the Department's *The Rain Follows the Forest* watershed initiative (available online at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/rain>) to implement on-the-ground actions needed to stabilize Hawaii's water sources. The initiative seeks to double the acreage of protected watershed forests by 2021. Significant accomplishments are underway as funding provided for Fiscal Years 2013-2015 will support the protection of over 38,000 acres and management of more than 487,000 acres. Additionally, thousands of seedlings have been planted, largely by volunteers.

Forests are essential to provide water at affordable rates. Hawaii's native forests absorb moisture from rainfall and passing clouds that condense on the thick vegetation and can increase groundwater supply by up to 50%. However, over half of these forests have already been lost to invasive species, causing extensive water loss across landscapes. Clearly, our forests are enormous economic assets. Just as clearly, their degradation is ongoing and accelerating. The longer Hawai'i waits to take significant action to halt this destruction, the higher the costs will be to reverse the damage and ensure our future water supply for current and future generations. In addition to increasing fresh water supplies, the protection of forests prevents erosion that muddies beaches, coral reefs, and fisheries. Forests reduce Hawaii's greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate many damaging impacts from climate change. Protection sustains the native plants and animals unique to our islands and sacred to the Hawaiian culture.

**WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**ESTHER KIA'AINA**  
FIRST DEPUTY

**WILLIAM M. TAM**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
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LAND  
STATE PARKS

In addition to watershed protection, the natural area reserve fund invests in many critical programs, including the Natural Area Reserves System, which protects the best remaining representatives of Hawai`i's native ecosystems, geological sites, and habitats for rare native plants and animals so that future generations can enjoy, study, and experience our unique natural heritage.

An appropriation to fund these programs is a responsible measure to provide immediate action to ensure wide-ranging benefits essential to Hawaii's environmental and economic health for current and future generations.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i  
Supporting S.B. 2062 Relating to Conservation  
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Thursday, February 6, 2014, 2:45PM, Room 225

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*The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which life in these islands depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 35,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.*

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The Nature Conservancy supports S.B. 2062 to provide additional funds to the DLNR's natural area reserve fund for watershed protection. In addition to this bill, we strongly encourage the Legislature to continue its support for the DLNR's *Rain Follows the Forest* watershed initiative ([www.dlnr.hawaii.gov/rain](http://www.dlnr.hawaii.gov/rain)) via the department's FY15 supplemental budget request including \$7,500,000 in capital funds and \$3,500,000 in general funds for watershed protection.

Healthy Hawaiian forests that are not overrun by invasive species act like a sponge, collecting rain and moisture from passing clouds, slowly delivering fresh water into streams and aquifers, absorbing greenhouse gases, and reducing runoff and siltation into near shore waters during storm events. Science indicates that one of the very likely effects of climate change in Hawai'i will be more severe storm events but overall less rainfall. One of the most effective tools we have to help address these effects of climate change is to maintain the health and natural function of our forests.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has a well-established, effective watershed protection program. This program involves its own direct, on the ground management work as well as working in partnership with other public and private land owners and land managers. The Department's Natural Area Reserve, Forest Reserve, Watershed Partnership, Forest Stewardship, and Natural Area Partnership Programs are prime examples of how the DLNR effectively conducts its own work and leverages watershed management goals across state, county, federal and private lands, taking advantage of many millions of dollars of non-state funds and work by non-state personnel.

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**Testimony of Hawai'i Green Growth  
In Support SB 2062 Relating to Conservation  
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment**

6 February 2014, 2:45pm  
Conference Room 225

Audrey Newman  
Hawai'i Green Growth  
P.O. Box 535  
Ho'olehua, Hawai'i 96729

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Hawai'i Green Growth (HGG) to **support the intent of SB 2062**, which proposes \$1million appropriation to the natural area reserve fund for watershed protection. HGG respectfully asks the Legislature to consider the **Administration's budget request for \$11 million to support Rain Follows the Forest**.

HGG is a multi-sector partnership committed to achieving a resilient, sustainable Hawai'i. HGG's members include more than 80 leaders and advisors from government, business and non-profit organizations across the energy, food, environment, green jobs and other sectors.

HGG strongly supports the State's goal to double the number of acres of priority watershed forest protected over the next decade, which requires \$11 million per year for Rain Follows the Forest. The Legislature provided this level of funding last year, and we urge you to continue this critical annual investment in the long-term security of our fresh water supply for residents, visitors, agriculture, the environment and more. Protecting Hawai'i's watersheds is also one of the most cost-effective ways to increase our resilience to climate change.

Healthy watersheds and water supply are essential to the long-term sustainability of our island economy, culture and environment. Watershed protection and restoration supports streams and aquifers, decreases erosion and siltation, supports agricultural food systems, absorbs greenhouse gases, and benefits reefs and fisheries.

HGG's members agree that watershed protection is a top priority for action by all sectors. State leadership and funding are essential for coordinated, strategic watershed management. In the past, the State's investment is leveraged by matching support from Hawai'i's effective network of public-private watershed partnerships on every island. Now is the time to give DLNR and partners sufficient support to protect out mauka lands today and in the future.

As a partnership representing Hawai'i's leaders in environment, food and energy, HGG asks for your consideration of the Administration's budget request for \$11 million to support Rain Follows the Forest. This funding is an important investment in Hawai'i's future.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Audrey Newman".

**Audrey Newman**

Senior Advisor & Coordinator, Hawai'i Green Growth (HGG)

*Bringing leaders together to achieve sustainability in Hawai'i & be a model for a green economy*

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [WTLTestimony](#)  
**Cc:** [lynhowe1946@yahoo.com](mailto:lynhowe1946@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB2062 on Feb 6, 2014 14:45PM\*  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 29, 2014 7:21:34 PM

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**SB2062**

Submitted on: 1/29/2014

Testimony for WTL/ENE on Feb 6, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 225

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lyn Howe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Conservation funding for watershed protection should be provided in order to maintain the watersheds and perhaps even restore them, as damage has been done, to include the many invasive species that should be removed, pollution in the water, and to help save the endangered species. With funding, much more of the watersheds can be maintained. It would be an ethical approach to environmental conservation and restoration.

Mongoose have been extraordinarily destructive to the watersheds in Hawaii, they have killed many of the native bird species, even drove some to extinction. It isn't just the mongooses causing trouble, there are many other invasive species out there wreaking havoc in the watersheds. The appropriate funding should help to cut down the amount of these invasive species.

Water pollution is one of the most lethal issues in the watersheds; too much pollution can ruin the entire watershed. The trash floating around cannot just keep floating around as it does, it should be removed before it all collects and ruins the watersheds entirely, it should be fished out somehow, there needs to be funding so people may fish out what trash they can.

Some of the endangered species are getting better on their own, however there are still those that are in peril and need help to come back up to the quantity there should be. Not all of the native species are capable of coming back on their own, with funding, restoration projects can be placed in effect to help save these species.

With funding, the watersheds can be helped a great deal to be conserved and restored. With funding the watersheds will be far healthier, and not just the watersheds, other parts of the ecosystem may be affected positively as well in result of the watersheds restoration.