

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE
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BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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LAND
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
1151 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 325
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND**

**Wednesday, March 14, 2018
3:01 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1974, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 1974, House Draft 1 proposes to transfer funds from the Natural Area Reserve Fund to the Department of Land and Natural Resources' (Department) Firefighter's Contingency Fund to be expended to upgrade firefighting equipment to be used jointly by the State and counties. **The Department supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State's forested watersheds and supports federal and county responders on the remaining area of the State. Due to climate change and associated droughts, the annual area burnt in Hawai'i has grown in past decades. In fact, the percentage of land area burned annually in Hawai'i exceeds the national average and some years it surpasses the 12 most fire-prone western states.¹

DOFAW's fire and emergency response mandates require specialized equipment. Resources are needed to modernize DOFAW's fleet of response vehicles and equipment to ensure timely response to wildfires. State crews currently rely on outdated vehicles, some of which are on loan from federal agencies, are incurring costly repairs, and have broken down while crews were en route to fires. The Department also assists counties during natural disasters, such as hurricanes

¹ Pacific Fire Exchange Wildfire in Hawaii Factsheet

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54825edae4b0426dc2c78f10/t/5696b96c0ab377d4c95fd307/1458772891261/Wildfire+in+Hawaii+fact+sheet+--+Pacific+Fire+Exchange+2014.pdf>

and lava flows. Much of DOFAW's equipment used for fire response is also used in such disasters.

1. The Department supports the use of the Natural Area Reserve Fund for upgrading firefighting equipment as fire suppression protects native ecosystems which are not fire-adapted.
2. It appears that the Department's Firefighter's Contingency Fund is appropriate for purchase of equipment.
3. Using equipment "jointly" with the counties is a viable concept as it pertains to the State's assistance to county response. Although renegotiating agreements to include joint equipment usage is possible, the current policy assigns trained DOFAW staff with equipment to assist the counties.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HB-1974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2018 3:00:33 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/14/2018 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:



STATE OF HAWAII
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March 12, 2018

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 420
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads

Subject: House Bill (HB) 1974, House Draft (HD) 1 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

I am Manuel P. Neves, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD support HB 1974, HD 1, which proposes to transfer \$1,000,000 from the natural area preserve fund to the fire fighter's contingency fund to upgrade fire fighting equipment for the state of Hawaii (State) and counties.

Summer is historically the busiest time of the year for wildland fires. As equipment technology improves and older equipment deteriorate, the State and county fire fighters are continually looking to replace equipment. The transfer of this money will provide the needed support to replace and upgrade aging equipment.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's passage of HB 1974, HD1 for the protection of the public and our fire fighters.

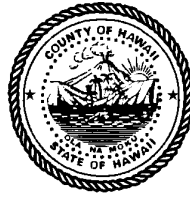
Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Lloyd Rogers at 723-7176 or lrogers@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

MANUEL P. NEVES
Chair

MPN/LR:clc

Harry Kim
Mayor



Darren J. Rosario
Fire Chief

Renwick J. Victorino
Deputy Fire Chief

County of Hawai'i
HAWAI'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
25 Aupuni Street • Suite 2501 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
(808) 932-2900 • Fax (808) 932-2928

March 13, 2018

The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Committee on Water & Land
State Capitol, Room 224
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads:

**SUBJECT: HB 1974, HD1 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 14, 2018
Time/Place of Hearing: 3:01 p.m., Conference Room 224

I am Darren J. Rosario, Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department of the County of Hawai'i (HCFD). The HCFD supports HB 1974, HD1, which proposes to appropriate funds from the natural area reserve fund in the sum of \$1,000,000 or so necessary to be deposited into the firefighter' contingency fund.

The HCFD works hand in hand with the Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry & Wildlife in the mitigation of wildfires in Hawai'i County. Our great partnership has resulted in the protection of countless homes and businesses during catastrophic wildfires throughout the past years. Currently, our partnership is working on mitigating a large wildfire on the West side of Hawai'i Island in the vicinity of Waikoloa Village.

Prompt response and mitigation efforts are key to the saving of open area spaces that are also used for agriculture or reserve functions. Mitigation efforts are further enhanced with serviceable equipment, apparatus, and proper personnel manning. This measure would greatly enhance the DLNR's ability to assist local County Fire Departments with the protection of its mutual communities, open rangelands, and forest reserves. The HCFD strongly urges you to support this measure.

Please do not hesitate to call me at 932-2903 or darren.rosario@hawaiicounty.gov should you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1974, HD1.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Darren J. Rosario.

DARREN J. ROSARIO
Fire Chief

