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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Wednesday, February 1, 2017
2:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 990
RELATING TO FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Senate Bill 990 proposes to amend Chapter 195F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to clarify conditions that must be met by applicants to participate and receive funds under the Forest Stewardship Program. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this Administrative measure.**

The Forest Stewardship Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners or long-term leaseholders of forests in managing, protecting, and restoring important natural resources in Hawaii's forested and formerly forested lands. Sixty-six percent of Hawaii's forested areas are privately managed and the program enables participants to responsibly manage important forest resources that provide vital public and private socioeconomic and environmental benefits. Senate Bill 990 specifically seeks to allow landowners, including long-term leaseholders, interested in participating in the Forest Stewardship Program to be eligible for an increased cost-share reimbursement rate from 50% to 75% for development of an approved forest stewardship management plan, as well as improving efficiencies in program implementation and increasing available eligible lands.

The Forest Stewardship Program connects landowners to natural resource experts that help them responsibly and sustainably manage their forest resources. This interaction with experts transfers knowledge and improves the management of privately managed forest lands, which benefits the public by increasing freshwater resources, providing habitat for native wildlife, reducing soil erosion and sedimentation on to coral reefs, identifying and controlling invasive species, and creating smart sustainable communities. The Program especially reduces the financial barrier for landowners and land managers to access natural resource experts by increasing the allowed cost-

share for the development of an approved forest stewardship management plan. The total cost for development of a management plans is between \$5,000 to \$15,000 depending on the size and complexity of the land management project. The financial support provided by the Program has helped 68 participants over 39,272 acres of land. However, the increasing cost of developing management plans over the past five years discourages landowners from seeking the technical support needed to successfully manage their forests.

Senate Bill 990 also proposes to remove language that restricts the types of forest land that the Department can work with under the program. The statute currently does not allow the Department to provide assistance for the sustainable management of forest product resources, including agroforestry, unless the land was cleared of native vegetation prior to January 1, 1991. The classification of land prior to January 1, 1991 provides technical challenges to assessing land eligibility with changes in land use over the past 25 years. Additionally, this restriction prevents the Department from providing sound management guidance to landowners that are interested in sustainable use of their resources if it was never cleared of native forest, including those lands found within the state agricultural district. The technical assistance provided by the program can improve the sustainable management of these lands, recover the overall forest condition and health, and encourage landowners to manage their native forests instead of clearing them.

Senate Bill 990 proposes to improve efficiencies by allowing the Department to enter into cost-share agreements solely for the development of management plans that is separated from a commitment to long-term program implementation agreements. This bill also allows landowners to request cost-share support for the implementation of their approved management plans from other partner programs (such as United States Department of Agriculture Farm Bill programs), decreasing the requested funding support to the State of Hawaii.

Forest Stewardship serves to stimulate investment in forestry as an economically viable land-use alternative that supplies Hawaii's rural communities with a source of revenue, provides locally grown products and energy to reduce Hawaii's dependence on imported goods, and contributes environmental benefits, such as clean water and habitat for Hawaii's native wildlife. With 66% of Hawaii's forested areas being privately owned or managed, the Department recognizes that public-private partnerships are essential to the present and future health of forests and the sustainable management of Hawaii's natural resources. The Program affords many of Hawaii's private forest owners access to resource experts, as well as provides a plan to improved and sustainable management of the natural resources they steward.



HAWAII FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

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January 30, 2017

Re: Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 990 and House Bill 1124

The Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA) strongly supports Senate Bill 990 and House Bill 1124, which proposes to amend Chapter 195F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to clarify conditions that must be met by applicants to participate and receive funds under DLNR Division of Forestry & Wildlife's Forest Stewardship Program. Since 1989, HFIA has been actively managing and conserving Hawaii's forests. Many beneficial projects have benefited from the Forest Stewardship Program, including our Keauhou Bird Conservation Center (KBCC) Discover Forest.

The Forest Stewardship Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners or long-term leaseholders of forests in managing, protecting, and restoring important natural resources in Hawaii's forested and formerly forested lands. Senate Bill 990 (SB990) specifically seeks to allow landowners interested in participating in the Forest Stewardship Program to be eligible for an increased cost-share reimbursement rate for development of a forest stewardship management plan from 50% to 75%, as well as removes language that restricts the types of forest land that the Department of Land and Natural Resources can work with under the program.

The program provides support for private landowners to interact with natural resource experts that help them describe their existing forest resources; identify project objectives; pinpoint resource needs, issues or concerns; and ultimately lay out a plan to meet those objectives and address any resource threats. Management of any property in Hawaii is expensive, and for forest landowners, successful management requires consulting with a variety of natural resource experts, including foresters, wildlife biologists, agroforestry design planners, nurseries, etc.

The financial support provided from the Forest Stewardship Program allows landowners to work directly with resource consultants to build a sustainable management plan and road map for improving and enhancing the forest resources they steward. For many private landowners, the management of their forest resources is not their primary occupation, but they are committed to the stewardship of their forest land. Reducing the financial barrier to accessing technical experts makes it easier to responsibly manage those lands and the numerous natural resources that are supported by a healthy and productive forest.

Mahalo,
Sophia Cabral-Maikui, Legislative Chair
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, January 27, 2017 9:37 PM
To: WTL Testimony
Cc: jamesjtz@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB990 on Feb 1, 2017 14:45PM

SB990

Submitted on: 1/27/2017

Testimony for WTL on Feb 1, 2017 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Gauer	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a frequent volunteer forest restoration worker with Ohulehule Forest Conservancy in Waikane, I support this program because it gives landowners the support to sustain long-term restoration which is what Native Plants require from my experiences in the forest, if they are to successfully propagate again and effect the larger ahupuaa or watershed on a higher scale to benefit the public. I do not represent the landowner(s) of the volunteering I do.

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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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2017 4:26 PM
To: WTL Testimony
Cc: oeqchawaii@doh.hawaii.gov
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB990 on Feb 1, 2017 14:45PM*

SB990

Submitted on: 1/31/2017

Testimony for WTL on Feb 1, 2017 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Scott Glenn	DOH/OEQC	Support	No

Comments:

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To: Senator Rhoads, Chair, Senate Committee on Water and Land

Re: SB990 — A bill to provide state taxpayer funds to support private landowners under the Forest Stewardship Program

From: Robin Kaye, Lana'i Resident

Date: January 31, 2017

It would be helpful to add under SECTION 4 a new subsection (4) that requires the private landowner to involve representatives of the community(s) adjacent to and/or directly impacted by the landowner's forest and watershed in order to receive any state funds.

On Lana'i, the private landowner of the forest and watershed has refused to participate in the state's Forest Stewardship Partnership, thus making Lana'i the only non-participating island.

Perhaps the incentive of additional state funds for watershed management would entice Pulama Lana'i (the landowner) to withdraw its objections and become a participant in this important program. Should that occur, it would be important for representatives of the Lana'i community to have a voice in the watershed management plan for their island.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robin Kaye

Robin Kaye
Lana'i Resident