

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS**

**Wednesday, February 13, 2019
10:10 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 897, PROPOSED HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 897, Proposed House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate \$2,900,000 for the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (LNR 172) to purchase equipment to respond to fires and emergencies in forest reserves and state lands, as well as \$500,000 (LNR 172) for tree planting for watershed restoration and carbon sequestration in Hawaii's forests. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) is the primary responder for wildland fires occurring on nearly one million acres of forested watershed (26% of the state's land area), and co-responds with federal and county agencies for an additional 32% of lands in the State. DOFAW does not employ full-time firefighters, but trains staff from all programs to respond when needed, with approximately 150 staff qualified to respond statewide. In addition to wildfire suppression, DOFAW serves as part of the State Emergency Response Team to address other emergencies and disasters, such as hurricanes and lava events.

Specialized equipment is essential for DOFAW's success in safely responding to fire, reducing response time and decreasing fire size. Off-road vehicles with water-carrying capacity, as well as heavy equipment, such as bulldozers and excavators, allow DOFAW to extinguish fires before they become large, reducing overall response costs. These pieces of equipment are equally useful in emergency situations for debris removal, road clearing, and other activities.

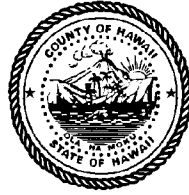
The majority of DOFAW's fleet is decades old. Firefighters currently rely on outdated vehicles, some of which are on loan from federal agencies, are incurring costly repairs, and that have broken down en route to fires. Some islands lack essential equipment entirely, such as Molokai, where no bulldozer can be accessed in the event of a wildland fire. During the recent Kauai floods, DOFAW's only excavator on the island assisted the Department of Transportation with road clearing, but was unavailable for months for other important work on DOFAW lands due to difficulties in transporting the equipment back from the north shore. A current inventory of DOFAW's fire and emergency response vehicles and equipment is available on request.

In an effort to continue to restore Hawaii's watersheds, as well as contribute to the State of Hawaii's commitment to uphold the Paris Climate Accord and progressive moves towards carbon neutrality by 2045, DOFAW has identified several areas within the State's forests and natural area reserves that contain degraded forest lands in need of additional tree planting to restore watershed health. Forest restoration via tree planting is one of the essential tools DOFAW uses to improve Hawaii's watersheds, and trees are one of the most efficient methods for removing greenhouse gases (namely carbon dioxide – CO₂) from the atmosphere. As trees grow they capture CO₂ and hold/store carbon within their trunks, roots and in the soil. The identified state reserves for tree planting are Hawaii County: Hilo, Puuwaawaa, Honuaula, Puu Makaala, Laupahoehoe; Honolulu County: Helemano, Ala Mahamoe, Waianae Kai; Maui County: Kahikinui, Na Kula; and Kauai County: Na Pali Kona, Puu Ka Pele. All of these identified areas are in need of replanting to bring them back to a fully functional, high quality watershed that will also sequester/capture CO₂ from the atmosphere to help address global climate change.

The Department looks forward to working further with the Legislature to support DOFAW's fire and emergency response capacity and reforestation efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Darren J. Rosario
Fire Chief

Lance S. Uchida
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

February 11, 2019

The Honorable Angus L. K. Mckelvey, Chair
Committee on Economic Development
and Business
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 309
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair McKelvey:

Subject: H.B. 897, RELATING TO DLNR
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 13, 2019
Time/Place of Hearing: 10:10 a.m., Conference Room 309

I am Darren J. Rosario, Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department of the County of Hawai'i (HCFD). The HCFD supports HB 897, which proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry & Wildlife (DoFaW) for the purchase of equipment to effectively respond to emergencies in forest reserves and state lands by DoFaW.

The HCFD works hand in hand with the Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry & Wildlife in the mitigation of wildfires and Search and Rescue incidents in Hawai'i County. Our great partnership has resulted in the protection of countless homes and businesses during catastrophic wildfires and successful search and rescues throughout the past years.

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. These same factors are critical in the prompt rescue of lost or injured patrons of various state properties. 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 932-2901 or darren.rosario@hawaiicounty.gov should you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 897.

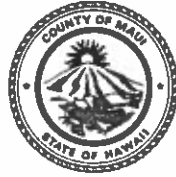
Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Darren J. Rosario.

DARREN J. ROSARIO
Fire Chief



MICHAEL P. VICTORINO
MAYOR



DAVID THYNE
FIRE CHIEF

BRADFORD VENTURA
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

COUNTY OF MAUI
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY

200 DAIRY ROAD
KAHULUI, HI 96732
PHONE: (808) 270-7561
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February 11, 2019

The Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Committee on Economic Development
And Business
State Capitol, Room 444
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair McKelvey:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 897 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources
H.D. 1 Proposed

I am David C. Thyne, Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department (MFD). The MFD supports House Bill 897 (H.D. 1 Proposed) which appropriates \$6,300,000 for the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (LNR 402) to purchase equipment to respond to fires and emergencies in forest reserves and state lands, as well as \$500,000 (LNR 172) for tree planting for watershed restoration and carbon sequestration in Hawaii's forests. **MFD supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Division of Forestry and Wildlife is primary responder for wildland fires occurring on one million acres of forested watershed (26% of the state's land area) and co-responds with federal and county agencies for an additional 32% of lands in the state. DOFAW does not employ full-time firefighters, but trains staff from all programs to respond when needed, with approximately 150 staff qualified to respond statewide. In addition to wildfire suppression, DOFAW serves as part of the State Emergency Response Team to address other emergencies and disasters, such as hurricanes and lava flows.

Specialized equipment is essential for the Division's success in safely responding to fire, reducing response time and decreasing fire size. Off-road vehicles with water-carrying capacity as well as heavy equipment such as bulldozers and excavators allow the Division to extinguish fires before they become large, reducing overall response costs. These pieces of equipment are equally useful in emergency situations for debris removal, road clearing, and other activities.

The Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair

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February 11, 2019

The majority of the Division's fleet is decades old. Firefighters currently rely on outdated vehicles, some of which are on loan from federal agencies, are incurring costly repairs, and have broken down enroute to fires. Some islands lack essential equipment entirely, such as Molokai where no bulldozer can be accessed in event of a wildland fire. During the recent Kauai floods, the Division's only excavator on the island assisted Department of Transportation with road clearing, but was unavailable for months for other important work on Division lands due to difficulties in transporting the equipment from the north shore. A current inventory of the Divisions fire and emergency response vehicles and equipment is available up on request.

The Maui Fire Department thanks the Committee for allowing us to comment on this important issue.

Should you have questions, please contact Fire Chief David Thyne at (808) 270-7562 or david.thyne@mauicounty.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Thyne', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

DAVID C. THYNE

Fire Chief

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting HB 897 Proposed HD1 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resource
House Committee on Economic Development and Business
Wednesday, February 13, 2019, 10:10AM, Room 309

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 preserves and work in over 30 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs, waters and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnership with government, private parties and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and the many benefits they provide to people.

The Nature Conservancy supports HB 897 Proposed HD1 that would provide additional funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) for fire and emergency response equipment, and for tree planting for forest restoration and carbon sequestration.

Unlike many continental locations, fire is not a part of the natural life-cycle of native Hawaiian ecosystems. Often, only a few native species regenerate after a wildfire fire, if at all. The void fires leave behind is quickly filled by fire-adapted alien weeds, which increase the risk of future fires. This vicious cycle of destruction has played out especially on Moloka'i, O'ahu and Hawai'i island, which have seen major fires in recent decades. These fires allow flammable alien grasses to gain a foothold, and with each new fire they spread further. Heavily impacted are some of the last remnants of native lowland dry forest and the rare species that survive there. Having appropriate equipment and other resources is essential to immediately addressing wildfire and then undertaking proper restoration quickly and effectively following a fire.

Additionally, The Nature Conservancy has been working with the DLNR, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and other partners to determine how to enhance the atmospheric carbon sequestration potential in Hawaiian forests and generate carbon offset credits in the process. A goal is to help Hawai'i meet the target set by the Legislature in Act 15 (2018) to sequester more carbon than we emit by 2045. Together, we have been working to qualify Hawaiian forest carbon offsets for sale in existing carbon markets and we are now turning our attention to forest carbon sequestration projects on the ground in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your support of this measure.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Founders: Samuel A. Cooke Herbert C. Cornuelle

LATE

HB-897

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 3:34:01 PM

Testimony for EDB on 2/13/2019 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Franny Kinslow Brewer | Big Island Invasive Species Committee | Support | No |

Comments:

As fire-promoting invasive grasses have continued to spread across the state, we are very concerned with the potential for bigger and more destructive fires. We fully support this effort to allow DLNR to be able to adequately prepare and respond to wildfire and other emergencies on state lands. Thank you.

LATE

HB-897

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 8:55:05 PM

Testimony for EDB on 2/13/2019 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dale Sandlin | Hawaii Cattlemens Council | Support | No |

Comments: