

**SB-1255-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2019 2:03:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/15/2019 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Stephanie A Whalen	Testifying for HARC	Support	No

Comments:



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on  
WAYS AND MEANS

Friday, February 15, 2019  
10:15 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1255, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Senate Bill 1255, Senate Draft 1 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 Administration measure.**

This bill makes minor changes to the existing statute to clarify Forest Stewardship Program requirements that will increase the effectiveness of the program. This bill will improve forest management on private lands, expand conservation of native forest, increase reforestation of degraded lands, and stimulate investment in forestry as an economically viable, sustainable land-use alternative.

The Forest Stewardship Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners in managing, protecting, and restoring Hawaii's forested lands. This measure will increase effective forest management by: (1) clarifying that long-term leaseholders can participate in the program; (2) increasing cost-share support for the development of forest stewardship management plans; (3) clarifying that production of non-timber forest products is allowed; and (4) increasing eligible types of land for forest management under the program.

The Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners develop forest stewardship management plans by supporting their access to technical experts. The bill requests increased cost-share support for the development of a management plan to a 75% cost-share; plans typically cost between \$5,000 to \$15,000, depending on size and complexity of the project. Increased cost-share support will reduce financial barriers faced by new or smaller landowners in seeking

technical guidance on how to manage forest land, while ensuring the public benefits provided by those forest lands are maintained or enhanced.

This measure increases eligible land for forest management by removing outdated language that does not allow the program to provide assistance to certain lands 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 program implementation due to changes in land use over the past 25 years. The measure will allow the Department to provide management guidance for lands that were never cleared of native forest, including those lands zoned in the agricultural district that contain native forests. This change will enable the program to provide technical assistance to encourage landowners to manage lands for sustainable production of forest products and agroforestry while maintaining their native forest resources.

Sixty-six percent of Hawaii's forested areas are privately owned or managed, and public-private partnerships are essential to the present and future health of these forests. The Forest Stewardship Program stimulates 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.