

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Monday, April 1, 2019
10:20 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 124, SENATE DRAFT 1/SENATE
RESOLUTION 93, SENATE DRAFT 1/URGING THE GOVERNOR, IN
COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES, TO ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A TREE PLANTING PROGRAM**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 124, Senate Draft 1/Senate Resolution 93, Senate Draft 1 urges the Governor, in coordination with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, assisted by the Office of Planning, to establish and implement a tree planting program. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of these measures and provides the following comments.**

The Department has several private landowner assistance programs available for land managers interested in improving and restoring their forested or formerly forested lands. Each of these programs, including the Forest Stewardship Program, Natural Area Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Urban and Community Forestry Program, and the Watershed Partnerships can support tree planting projects on private lands. Although these programs provide the framework for encouraging and supporting tree planting projects, with 66% of Hawaii's forest lands managed by private landowners, there is not sufficient funding in any of these programs to meet the demand or need for tree planting support.

Additionally, the Department has the ability to conduct and a need for tree planting across the public lands that it manages (equal to almost one-half of the land area in Hawai'i). For example, the Division of Forestry and Wildlife has identified over 180,000 acres just within the Forest Reserve System that would benefit from additional tree planting to improve watershed health and that would sequester carbon dioxide (equal to approximately 5 million to 7 million trees) should funding be made available.

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

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Forest ecosystems not only provide the water that sustains our lives in the islands, they also prevent soil erosion that damages our coral reefs and sequester and store remarkable amounts of carbon. Forest management and restoration is a powerful natural climate change solution. Recent scientific estimates by the United States Geological Survey suggest that an additional four million metric tons of carbon, equivalent to the annual average emissions of about 1.15 million Hawaii residents, could be sequestered and stored by reforesting current non-native grass and shrub-lands under the jurisdiction of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

The Department and partners have documented a five percent loss in urban tree canopy in a five year period on O‘ahu, our most populous island. This equates to a total removal of over 76,000 trees. The Department strongly supports actions, such as this one, to reverse this trend statewide. Trees in urban and rural areas encourage safer streets (by slowing traffic), reduce urban heat island effect, improve stormwater runoff and erosion, improve air quality, and sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.