

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 House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Friday, February 21, 2020
12:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2033, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 2033, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate unspecified funds to be expended for the Forest Resource Management and Development Program (LNR 172) by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to purchase firefighting equipment. **The Department supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

DOFAW is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State's forested watersheds (or 25% of the land area in Hawai'i) 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.

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 State crews currently rely on outdated vehicles, some of which are on loan from federal agencies, are incurring costly repairs, and have broken down while crews were en route to fires.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 and lava flows. Much of DOFAW's equipment used for fire response is also used in such disasters.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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



**KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I**

**DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**ROBERT F. WESTERMAN
FIRE CHIEF**

**Testimony of Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief, Kaua'i Fire Department**

**Before the
Committee on Finance
February 21, 2020; 12:00 pm
Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
House Bill 2033, House Draft 1
Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources**

Honorable Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee:

The State Fire Council (SFC) and the Kaua'i Fire Department (KFD) **support** HB 2033, HD 1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) to purchase firefighting equipment.

The DOFAW is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State's forested watersheds (or 25% of the land area in Hawai'i) 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.

DOFAW's fire and emergency response mandates require specialized equipment. Financial 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 malfunctioned while crews were en route to fires. The Department also assists counties during natural disasters, such as hurricanes and lava flows. Much of DOFAW's equipment used for fire response is also used in such disasters.

The DOFAW's expertise and collaboration with the county fire departments has been invaluable in protecting residences, buildings, and critical infrastructure from the encroachment of wildland-urban interface fires throughout Hawai'i.

The SFC and the KFD urge your committee's support on the passage of HB 2033, HD 1.

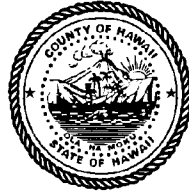
Sincerely,

Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief

RFW:st



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
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February 20, 2020

The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
Committee on Finance
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Luke:

Subject: H.B. 2033, HD1, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Hearing Date: Friday, February 21, 2020
Time/Place of Hearing: 12:00 p.m., Conference Room 308

I am Darren J. Rosario, Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department of the County of Hawai'i (HCFD) and Vice Chairman of the State Fire Council. The HCFD supports HB 2033, which proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry & Wildlife (DoFaW) for the purchase of firefighting equipment.

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 HB 2033, HD1.

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.

Respectfully,

DARREN J. ROSARIO
Fire Chief



HB-2033-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2020 7:33:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2020 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2033-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2020 8:17:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2020 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support HB2033. Firefighting equipment positioned around the islands is essential to protecting Hawaii's residents, environment and animal species from wildfires, which are occurring more frequently due to climate change-induced droughts.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Andrea Quinn

Kihei, Maui

LATE

HB-2033-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2020 10:45:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2020 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Smith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The Division of Forestry and Wildlife is the premier wildland firefighting agency in the state, and should be equipped as such for the protection of natural resources and public health and safety.