

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



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

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

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FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2019
1:20 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 897, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 897, House Draft 2 proposes to appropriate unspecified funds for the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (LNR 172). **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.**

House Bill 897, House Draft 2 proposes to appropriate unspecified funds to the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (LNR 172) to purchase equipment to respond to fires, emergencies, and other land management needs in forest reserves and state lands; to improve recreation opportunities in the Forest Reserve System; for tree planting for watershed restoration and carbon sequestration in Hawaii's forests; to invest in forest products development; and for positions. The Department greatly appreciates the consideration of these important projects and what they can do for improving the management of Hawaii's natural and cultural resources. The Department notes that House Bill 897, House Draft 1 (HB897 HD1) included funding amounts for each of these projects that would allow the Department to implement them as previously described.

The Department does note that the requested means of financing change for two positions within the LNR 172 was not included in House Bill 897, House Draft 1 nor House Draft 2. The United (U.S). Forest Service has been provided funding support for these 2 FTE positions (the Cooperative Resource Management Forester since the 1990s and the Nursery Worker since 2016) via the Cooperative Forestry Act. Under this Act, the U.S. Forest Service agreed to provide support for several state level programs provided state governments invested, grew, and

eventually adopted the programs. Now that the available federal budget for these programs is declined (due to wildfire borrowing and budget re-allocation), the federal grant funds can no longer sustain these state positions. The 2 FTE positions support the management of the State of Hawaii Forest Stewardship and Forest Legacy Programs, as well as the State Tree Nurseries. Conversion of the positions from federal to general funds is necessary to maintain the positions that provide essential services to the public and private landowners (66% of Hawaii's forests are managed by private landowners), including land management guidance and acquisition. These positions are also essential for securing future competitive and acquisition grants (estimated at \$300K to \$5mil/year) as well as sustaining seedling revenue from state nurseries.

Responding to Emergencies

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 corresponds 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. A current inventory of DOFAW's fire and emergency response vehicles and equipment is available on request. The \$2.9 million that was identified in HB897 HD1 would allow the Department to replace and increase our emergency response equipment.

Tree Planting for Watershed and Carbon Sequestration

In an effort to continue restoring 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. 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. All the identified reserves 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 \$500,000 that was identified in HB897 HD1 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-2020 and \$500,000 for FY 2020-2021 would allow the Department to begin restoring these reserves for the benefit of Hawaii's

water source as well as mitigating greenhouse gas responsible for global climate change. Project locations and details are available upon request.

Improving Recreation Opportunities in the Forest Reserve System

The demand for public recreational opportunities is continuing to grow with more people (including both residents and tourist) wanting to explore, access, and use Hawaii's public forest trails and campsites. With the increase in social media highlighting Hawaii's trails and unique experiences, the number of people on forest trails has dramatically increased. This increase in people has an increase impact on Hawaii's natural resources as well as raises safety concerns (as documented in the numerous emergency response and rescue of hikers from remote mountain trails). This Department has identified several project areas that will (1) enhance visitor experience in Hawaii's public forests and campgrounds; (2) expand opportunities for people to recreate; (3) protect the culturally significant and historic sites; (4) developed education sites for the public and school groups to be able to easily explore the forest; (5) address and mitigate access issues in the forest reserves that are seeing increased visitors. The \$925,000 that was identified in HB897 HD1 would provide the Department with the ability to invest in new recreational opportunities as well as protect those places that are experiencing high rates of visitors. A specific list of projects is available upon request.

Investing in Forest Products

The Forest Reserve System is mandated to create revenue opportunities that will support their management. To increase these opportunities, additional investment is needed now to ensure that this revenue is available in the near future. This includes commercially valuable tree planting (such as with koa and sandalwood), development of forest product collection sites, and analysis of existing and available forest products. Revenues from the forest reserves are primarily derived from sale of forest products, including timber, commercial collections of forest resources, and new alternative revenues sources such as carbon sequestration. Specific projects would include (1) planting of commercially valuable tree on newly acquired state properties and in timber management areas; (2) completing environmental due diligence for timber harvesting projects; and (3) analyzing existing state carbon resources that would be ultimately be available for future carbon offsets to assist in meeting the State's carbon neutrality goals. The \$350,000 in FY 2019-2020 and \$175,000 in FY 2020-2021 that were identified in HB897, HD1 would allow the Department to make strategic invests in developing or expending revenue opportunities that would support the management of the Forest Reserve System. Project details are also available upon request.

The ten new positions will provide the necessary staffing to manage the 680,000 acres of the State of Hawaii Forest Reserve System, including managing invasive pests and diseases; generating revenue opportunities via forest products development and nursery sales; and watershed protection and management. The Auto Mechanic is necessary to help maintain the large number of vehicles and motorized equipment needed to access remote locations as well as respond to wildland fires and other natural resources disasters events.

The Department looks forward to working further with the Legislature on the Department's LNR 172 programs and goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SCOTT T. MURAKAMI
DIRECTOR

LEONARD HOSHIJO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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March 11, 2019

The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 213
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kahele:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 897, House Draft (HD) 2 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

I am Manuel P. Neves, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD support HB 897, HD 2, which appropriates funds for the DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) to acquire fire and emergency response equipment.

Personnel from fire departments in all four counties across Hawaii frequently collaborate with fire fighters from the DOFAW to extinguish fires that occur in wildland areas and the wildland urban interface (WUI), which is the zone of transition between wildland and human development. Recent 2018 California wildland fires resulting in substantial loss of life and property demonstrate the importance of fire control before fires encroach upon the WUI. Furthermore, wildland areas contain endangered flora and fauna indigenous to Hawaii emphasizing the significance of fire suppression in those areas.

The passage of HB 897, HD 2 will help ensure fire fighters in the DOFAW and county fire departments continue to protect life, property, and precious natural resources in wildland areas and the WUI.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of HB 897, HD 2.

The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
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Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Lloyd Rogers at 723-7176 or lrogers@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,



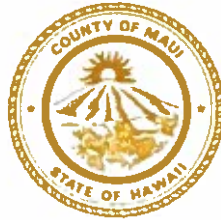
MANUEL P. NEVES
Chair

MPN/LR:clc

MICHAEL P. VICTORINO
Mayor

DAVID C. THYNE
Fire Chief

BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Deputy Fire Chief



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 DAIRY ROAD
KAHULUI, HI 96732

March 11, 2019

The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 213
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kahele:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 897, House Draft (HD) 2 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

I am David C. Thyne, member of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department (MFD). The SFC and the MFD support HB 897, HD 2, which appropriates funds for the DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) to acquire fire and emergency response equipment.

Personnel from fire departments in all four counties across Hawaii frequently collaborate with fire fighters from the DOFAW to extinguish fires that occur in wildland areas and the wildland urban interface (WUI), which is the zone of transition between wildland and human development. Recent 2018 California wildland fires resulting in substantial loss of life and property demonstrate the importance of fire control before fires encroach upon the WUI. Furthermore, wildland areas contain endangered flora and fauna indigenous to Hawaii emphasizing the significance of fire suppression in those areas.

The passage of HB 897, HD 2 will help ensure fire fighters in the DOFAW and county fire departments continue to protect life, property, and precious natural resources in wildland areas and the WUI.

The SFC and the MFD urge your committee's support on the passage of HB 897, HD 2.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Lloyd Rogers at (808) 723-7176 or lrogers@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. C. Thyne".

DAVID C. THYNE
Fire Chief



KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I
DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

KILIPAKI VAUGHAN
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

March 11, 2019

The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 213
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Kahele:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 897, House Draft (HD) 2 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

I am Kilipaki Vaughan, Deputy Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD). The KFD **supports** HB 897, HD 2, which appropriates funds for the DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) to acquire fire and emergency response equipment.

Personnel from fire departments in all four counties across Hawaii frequently collaborate with fire fighters from the DOFAW to extinguish fires that occur in wildland areas and the wildland urban interface (WUI), which is the zone of transition between wildland and human development. Recent 2018 California wildland fires resulting in substantial loss of life and property demonstrate the importance of fire control before fires encroach upon the WUI. Furthermore, wildland areas contain endangered flora and fauna indigenous to Hawaii emphasizing the significance of fire suppression in those areas.

The passage of HB 897, HD 2 will help ensure fire fighters in the DOFAW and county fire departments continue to protect life, property, and precious natural resources in wildland areas and the WUI.

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KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
THE COUNTY OF KAUAI
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MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

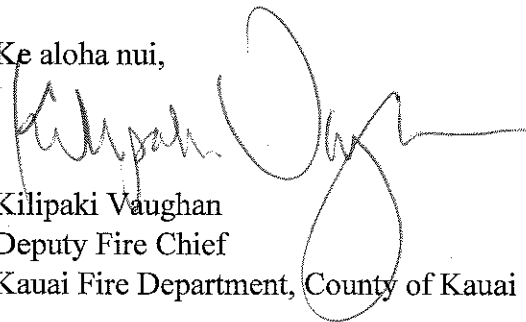
KILIPAKI VAUGHAN
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
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March 11, 2019

The KFD urges your committee's support on the passage of HB 897, HD 2.

Should you have questions, please contact me at (808) 241-4980 or via email at kvaughan@kauai.gov

Ke aloha nui,



Kilipaki Vaughan
Deputy Fire Chief
Kauai Fire Department, County of Kauai

KV/dg



Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting HB 897 HD2 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resource
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Wednesday, March 13, 2019, 1:20PM, Room 229

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 HD2 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.

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