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GOVERNOR OF  
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE  
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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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LAND  
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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  
WATER AND LAND

Friday, February 1, 2019  
1:15 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1141  
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

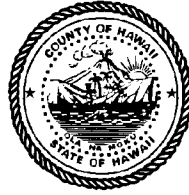
Senate Bill 1141 proposes to appropriate \$240,000 for the purpose of refurbishing and retrofitting the Kūlani water tanks to serve as water reservoirs for firefighting in the Pu‘u Maka‘ala Natural Area Reserve (NAR) and surrounding areas. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

In 2010, the Department’s Division of Forestry and Wildlife assumed ownership of 7,000 acres on Hawaii Island formerly managed by Department of Public Safety, which includes lands belonging to the former Kulani Correctional Facility. The Kulani Tract of Pu‘u Maka‘ala NAR provides essential habitat, watershed protection, and long-term conservation of native wildlife and plant species. On the property are three 400,000-gallon water tanks, which in the past have served as water reservoirs for firefighting. However, the earthquake of May 2018 severely damaged one of the tanks, and the other two need refurbishment. These tanks serve as the only available source of water in this high elevation region, which encompasses over 200,000 acres of state and federal lands. Water tanks are a first line of defense against wildland fires. These tanks allow firefighters to quickly access water and greatly cut down transit times for helicopters dropping water on the fire and for water-trucks delivering water to front-line fire suppression efforts. Having ample water resources near a fire saves money spent on helicopter time, as well as limiting the time that fire suppression personnel spend working in hazardous conditions. The faster a fire can be extinguished, the less area is burned, and the less likely the fire will get out of control.

This bill will provide funding for refurbishment of the three Pu‘u Maka‘ala NAR water-holding tanks. These tanks are key to landscape-level fire protection, providing 1.2 million gallons of water in an area without other adequate and accessible nearby water sources. Replacement of these tanks has been estimated at \$2,000,000. The project will address the threat of fire to protect some of the Island’s best koa and ‘ōhi‘a forest habitat for rare and endangered birds and provide protection for the aviary for the critically endangered ‘Alalā, which is less than half a mile away.

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

January 30, 2019

The Honorable Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair  
Committee on Water and Land  
State Capitol, Room 229  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Kahele:

**Subject: S.B. 1141, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**Hearing Date: Friday, February 1, 2019**  
**Time/Place of Hearing: 1:15 p.m., Conference Room 229**

I am Darren J. Rosario, Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department of the County of Hawai'i (HCFD). The HCFD supports SB 1141 which proposes to make and appropriation to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) for the purpose of refurbishing and retrofitting the Kulani water tanks to serve as water reservoirs for firefighting.

Several key components are needed in the mitigation of wildfires in the vast remote areas of Hawai'i Island: a.) Access to the incident location, b.) Applicable equipment and firefighting personnel, c.) access to water, d.) etc. The water tanks at the Kulani location provide critical water supply needs for our firefighting apparatus and aircraft.

Within this past decade, The DLNR assumed responsibility of nearly 10,000 acres of land surrounding the Kulani area. This area also included three large water tanks that have been our source of water for the mitigation of fires around that area. One of these critical tanks was damaged last year during an earthquake event. The DLNR needs assistance to refurbish and retrofit this tank and the others so that they remain reliable water supply sources.

The DLNR DoFaw and the HCFD are key partners in the mitigation of wildfire emergencies within Hawai'i County. Your Committee's support of this measure provides both our organizations with one of the necessary tools to combat the devastating effects of wildfire. This support will greatly protect the Pu'u Maka'ala natural reserve area and surrounding areas. The HCFD strongly urges you to support this measure.



**S.B. 1141, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

January 30, 2019

Please do not hesitate to call me at 932-2903 or [darren.rosario@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:darren.rosario@hawaiicounty.gov) should you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1141.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darren", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

DARREN J. ROSARIO  
Fire Chief



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

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

**KILIPAKI VAUGHAN  
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF**

January 30, 2019

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

Dear Chair Kahele:

Subject: SB 1141, Senate Draft (SD) 1, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

I am Kilipaki Vaughan, Deputy Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD). The KFD supports SB 1141, SD1.

SB 1141, SD1 will provide funding for refurbishment of the three Pu'u Maka'ala NAR water holding tanks. These water supply tanks are key to landscape-level fire protection, providing 1.2 million gallons of water in an area without other adequate and accessible nearby water sources. Replacement of these tanks has been estimated at \$2,000,000. The project will address the threat of fire to protect some of the Island's best koa and 'ōhi'a forest habitat for rare and endangered birds, and provide protection for the aviary for the critically endangered Alala, which is less than half a mile away. The faster a fire can be extinguished, the less area is burnt and the less likely the fire will get out of control.

The KFD urge your committees' passage of SB 1141, SD 1, for the quick access to water and to greatly cut down on transit times.

Please feel free to contact me at (808) 241-4980 or [kvaughan@kauai.gov](mailto:kvaughan@kauai.gov) should you have any questions on our support of SB 1141, SD1.

Ke aloha nui,

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

KV/dag



DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



LEONARD HOSHIJO  
DIRECTOR

LOIS IYOMASA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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January 31, 2019

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

Dear Chair Kahale:

Subject: Senate Bill (SB) 1141 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 SB 1141, which appropriates funding for the refurbishing and retrofitting of the Kūlani water tanks to serve as water reservoirs for fire fighting in the Pu'u Maka'ala Natural Area Reserve (NAR) and surrounding areas.

In 2010, the DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife assumed ownership of 7,000 acres on Hawaii Island, which was formerly managed by the Department of Public Safety and includes lands belonging to the former Kūlani Correctional Facility. The Kūlani Tract of Pu'u Maka'ala NAR provides essential habitat, watershed protection, and long-term conservation of native wildlife and plant species.

The property houses three 400,000-gallon water tanks, which have served as water reservoirs for fire fighting in the past. However, the earthquake of May 2018 severely damaged one of the tanks. These tanks serve as the only available source of water in this high-elevation region which encompasses over 200,000 acres of state and federal lands. Water tanks are a first line of defense against wildland fires, and these tanks allow fire fighters to quickly access water and substantially reduce transit times. Nearby water resources facilitate reduction of significant financial expenditures on expensive helicopter time, and limit the time the staff spend working and in hazardous conditions. The faster a fire can be extinguished, the less area is burned and less likely to burn out of control.

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The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahale, Chair  
Page 2  
January 31, 2019

This bill will provide funding for refurbishment of the three water tanks. These tanks are key to landscape-level fire protection by providing 1.2 million gallons of water in an area without other adequate and accessible nearby water sources. Replacement of these tanks has been estimated at \$2,000,000. The project will address the threat of fire to protect some of the island's best koa and ohia forest habitat for rare and endangered birds and provide protection for the aviary for the critically endangered Alala, which is less than one-half mile away.

Successful passage of SB 1141 will help ensure that Kauai receives the support necessary to adequately manage public lands and respond to emergency needs.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of SB 1141.

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

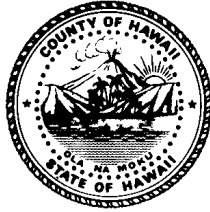
Sincerely,



MANUEL P. NEVES  
Chair

MPN/LR:clc

**Harry Kim**  
Mayor



**Wil Okabe**  
Managing Director

**Barbara J. Kossow**  
Deputy Managing Director

**County of Hawai'i**  
**Office of the Mayor**

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January 31, 2019

Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair  
Committee on Water and Land  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Committee on Water and Land  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

**Re: SB 1141 Making an Appropriation to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Kulani Water Tanks)**  
**Hearing Date: February 1, 2019 – 1:15 PM; Senate Conference Room 229**

Hawai'i County's Fire Chief has laid out the case in support of SB 1141, and explained why it is so important to us. County Fire and DLNR work hand in hand in fighting wildfires, and obviously their efforts can only be successful if they have adequate resources.

I urge approval of SB 1141.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim  
Mayor, County of Hawai'i



**SB-1141**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 12:03:14 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/1/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-1141**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 8:18:10 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/1/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Greg Funderburk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Senate Bill 1141 provides funding for the purpose of refurbishing and retrofitting the KĀ«lani water tanks to serve as water reservoirs for firefighting in the Pu'u Maka'ala Natural Area Reserve and surrounding areas. As a wildland firefighter with over 20 years of firefighting experience, I support Senate Bill 1141.

The rapid suppression of wildfires in remote forested areas relies heavily on the aerial application of water to slow and stop the spread of fire. The Pu'u Maka'ala tract is located on the slopes of Mauna Loa where naturally occurring surface water is scarce. The Pu'u Maka'ala water tanks serve as the only available source of water in this high elevation region which encompasses over 200,000 acres of state and federal land providing essential habitat, watershed protection, and long term conservation of native wildlife and plant species.

Established water sources are an important first line of defense against wildland fires. Water tanks in remote locations greatly cut down transit times increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of firefighting efforts. Rapid and efficient suppression actions result in smaller fire size, lower firefighting costs, and less exposure to hazardous conditions for firefighters. The refurbishment of the Pu'u Maka'ala tanks is an important element of providing landscape-level fire protection in an area without other adequate and accessible water sources.

**SB-1141**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 11:23:12 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/1/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Clay Trauernicht	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

From: Dr. Clay Trauernicht, Wildland Fire Specialist, University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Submitted on: Januar 31st, 2019

Testimony in support of SB1141, Relating to Land and Natural Resources  
Submitted to: The Senate Committee on Water and Land (WTL)

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am submitting personal testimony in support of SB1141, which will provide funding to refurbish 3, 400,000 gallon water tanks on the upper slopes of Mauna Loa. Water availability is a critical limiting factor for successful suppression of wildfires, especially in remote areas and these 30 year old tanks are the only high elevation water source in the region. Wildfires have caused irreparable damage to high elevation forests in Hawaii county and elsewhere in the state - forests that contain high numbers of threatened and an endangered species, hold immense cultural value, and recharge groundwater supplies for our citizens. Moreover, my own published research indicates fires will become more frequent at high elevation areas in Hawaii, such as where these tanks currently sit, over the coming decades. This bill will allow DLNR to improve water supply that will increase the speed and safety of operations for our firefighters and allow them to minimize the impacts of these fires on Hawaii's natural and cultural heritage.