



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA
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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committees on Water & Land
and Consumer Protection & Commerce
Friday, February 2, 2024
2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 and via Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 2700, RELATING TO WILDFIRES

Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima and Members of the Committees:

My name is Gordon Ito, and I am the Insurance Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Insurance Division. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and appropriates funds.

We note that the programs proposed in this bill may fall within the definition of insurance as defined in Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) chapter 431 (Insurance Code), and accordingly may be subject to various provisions within chapter 431, including but not limited to Insurers General Requirements (article 3), Domestic Insurers (article 4), Financial Condition (article 5), and Rate Regulation (article 14). If the intent of the bill is not to create programs subject to insurance regulations, we respectfully suggest the bill

be amended to clearly exempt the programs proposed by this bill from regulation under the Insurance Code.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the bill.



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**On the following measure:
H.B. 2700, RELATING TO WILDFIRES**

Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima and Members of the Committees:

My name is Denise Balanay, and I am the Senior Hearings Officer of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to establish the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and to appropriate funds.

Section 17 of the bill sets forth a procedure for affected persons or entities to request an administrative or contested case hearing on determinations made by the wildfire relief fund administrator or board. Should this measure be enacted, the OAH respectfully requests the following amendments to section 17:

- Subsection (a), page 39, lines 19 through 20: "may request [~~a review and~~] a contested case hearing on that determination before the department of

- commerce and consumer affairs[-] , pursuant to chapter 91.” This amendment would clarify the type of hearing contemplated by this bill and the statutory authority for the request for hearing.
- Subsection (b), page 40, lines 1 through 8: “Upon receipt of a request for ~~[review of]~~ hearing on the administrator or board’s determination, ~~[the department of commerce and consumer affairs shall refer the request for hearing to the office of administrative hearings for determination as expeditiously as possible. A hearing shall be scheduled for a date no more]~~ the office of administrative hearings shall schedule a hearing date no later than days after its receipt ~~[by the department of commerce and consumer affairs]~~ of the request for [a] hearing.” Since subsection (b) seeks an administrative determination “as expeditiously as possible,” this amendment would allow the affected person or entity to request a hearing directly with the OAH.
 - Subsection (c), page 40, lines 9 through 14: “Following the conclusion of any hearing or prior to the conclusion of the hearing, with the concurrence of the parties, the office of administrative hearings shall promptly, and no later than days after the hearing, decide the matter and ~~[make an order]~~ issue findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a decision in accordance with the ~~[administrative judge’s decision.]~~ hearings officer’s determination.” This amendment would conform with the verbiage in Hawaii Revised Statutes chapter 91 and Hawaii Administrative Rules title 16, chapter 201 (Administrative Practice and Procedure).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

TESTIMONY OF
LEODOLOFF R. ASUNCION, JR.
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF HAWAII

TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND
AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

February 2, 2024
2:00 p.m.

Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees:

MEASURE: H.B. No. 2700

TITLE: RELATING TO WILDFIRES.

DESCRIPTION: Establishes the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State. Appropriates funds.

POSITION:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") offers the following comments for consideration.

COMMENTS:

The Commission appreciates the intent of this measure to mitigate the effects of a catastrophic wildfire in Hawaii by establishing a wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in Hawaii.

The Commission presently regulates both investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities. The Commission notes that in the current draft of this measure both investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities may participate in the wildfire relief fund as contributors but differ with respect to: (1) whether their contributions shall be recovered from their customers in rates; and (2) in the evaluation of the prudence of their conduct should a catastrophic wildfire been ignited by their facilities. Given that both investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities are regulated by the Commission and that the

primary difference between investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities is their ownership structures, which have little to no bearing on the amount of risk associated with a catastrophic wildfire, should the Legislature intend to the move this measure forward, the Commission suggests that this measure be amended such that there is conformity between investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities with respect to whether their contributions may be recovered from their customers in rates and in the evaluation of the prudence of their conduct should a catastrophic wildfire have been ignited by the public utilities facilities.

The Commission further notes that as written this measure would create, in any Commission proceeding to evaluate the prudence of an investor-owned utility's conduct if a catastrophic wildfire may have been ignited by the facilities of an investor-owned utility, a presumption that an investor-owned utility's conduct will be deemed to be prudent if an investor-owned utility has a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the Commission. Such a presumption may not be warranted if the investor-owned utility's facilities may have ignited a catastrophic wildfire, and the removal of such a presumption would not impair or limit the investor-owned utility's ability to present evidence that its conduct was prudent.

Consistent with the Commission's comments above, the Commission offers the following amendments to:

Page 22, Line 17

(k) Utility contribution. ~~An investor-owned~~ A public utility's contributions to the wildfire relief fund, including initial and supplemental contributions, ~~shall~~ may be recovered from its customers in rates, unless the public utilities commission directs otherwise pursuant to section -9.

Page 23, Line 27 to Page 27, Line 18

§ -9 Replenishment of the wildfire relief fund; determination of prudence. (a) If the administrator, or an agency of the State with responsibility for determining the causes of wildfires, informs the public utilities commission that a catastrophic wildfire may have been ignited by the facilities of ~~an investor-owned~~ a public

utility that is a contributor, the public utilities commission shall initiate a proceeding to review the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility's conduct leading to the catastrophic wildfire and make findings. The public utilities commission may, even without formal notice from the administrator or the agency, initiate this proceeding of its own accord.

(b) The public utilities commission shall evaluate the prudence of the conduct of the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility in connection with a catastrophic wildfire as follows:

~~(1) If the investor-utility has a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the public utilities commission, the investor-utility's conduct will be deemed to have been prudent, unless a party to the proceeding creates a serious doubt as to the prudence of the investor-owned utility's conduct; or~~

~~(2) If the investor- public utility does not have a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the public utilities commission, or if the public utilities commission determines that the presumption is overcome,~~

(1) The public utilities commission shall determine whether the public utility acted prudently, considering only acts that may have caused the ignition and evaluating the public utility's actions in the context of the public utility's overall systems, processes and programs, such that an error by a public utility employee would not be a basis for a finding of imprudence, unless that error was the result of an imprudent system, process, or program.

(c) In evaluating prudence under this section, the public utilities commission shall determine whether the actions of the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility were consistent with actions that a reasonable public utility would have undertaken in good faith under similar circumstances, at the relevant point in time, and based on the information available to the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility at the relevant point in time.

Reasonable conduct shall not be limited to the optimum practice, method, or act to the exclusion of others, but

rather shall encompass a spectrum of possible practices, methods, or acts consistent with utility system needs, the interest of ratepayers, and the requirements of governmental agencies of competent jurisdiction.

(d) If the public utilities commission determines that imprudent conduct by the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility caused the catastrophic wildfire, the public utilities commission shall determine whether to order the public utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in whole or in part for payments from the fund made in connection with the catastrophic wildfire. In determining the amount of reimbursement, if any, the public utilities commission shall consider the extent and severity of the public utility's imprudence and factors within and beyond the public utility's control that may have led to or exacerbated the costs from the catastrophic wildfire, including but not limited to humidity, temperature, winds, fuel, merged wildfires with independent ignitions, third-party actions that affected the spread of the wildfire, and fire suppression activities.

(e) The public utilities commission shall not order the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in an amount that exceeds the lesser of:

- (1) The costs that the public utilities commission determines were due to the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility's imprudence; or
- (2) Twenty per cent of the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility's transmission and distribution equity rate base minus the amounts the public utility has reimbursed, or is required to reimburse, the wildfire relief fund during the period of three consecutive calendar years ending on December 31 of the year in which the calculation is being performed.

(f) If the public utilities commission orders the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund, the public utility shall not recover the amount of the reimbursement in rates charged to ratepayers.

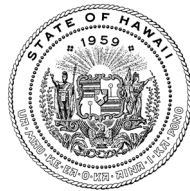
(g) If the administrator, or an agency of the State with responsibility for determining the causes of wildfires or other catastrophic wildfires concludes that the conduct of a ~~cooperative utility, other~~ a governmental entity, or private landowner that is a contributor may have caused the

occurrence or contributed to the severity of a catastrophic wildfire, the administrator shall assess the prudence of the contributor's conduct, applying the same standard of prudence applied to ~~investor-owned~~ public utilities pursuant to subsection (c).

(h) If the administrator determines that the contributor acted imprudently and that such imprudence caused or contributed to the severity of the catastrophic wildfire, the administrator shall recommend that the board require such contributor to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in whole or in part for payments that the fund made in connection with the catastrophic wildfire, considering the factors set forth in subsection (d), subject to a cap of ten per cent of the contributor's assets within Hawaii, measured over a rolling three-year period.

Further, the Commission observes that it is hard to determine whether the limitations on reimbursement provided in section - 9 (d) are appropriate without first understanding the relative contributions to capitalization by different entities. Additionally, the Commission questions whether assessing "only acts that may have caused the ignition", is appropriate, or whether it may also be appropriate to assess whether a public utility contributed to the extent of a wildfire as well. Should the Legislature maintain separate treatment of investor-owned and cooperative utilities, it may be appropriate to designate different relative capitalization amounts under section - 8 (d) (3).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 2700

February 2, 2024
2:00 p.m.
Room 329 and Videoconference

RELATING TO WILDFIRES

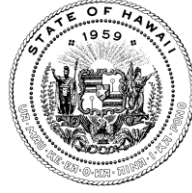
The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 2700: 1) establishes the Wildfire Relief Fund (WRF) within the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) and outside of the State treasury to hold contributions from participating entities and fund compensation payments for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires; 2) establishes the WRF Corporation within DCCA to administer the WRF; 3) authorizes the Public Utilities Commission to order public utilities to reimburse the WRF for compensation payments if it determines the public utility engaged in imprudent conduct; and 4) appropriates an unspecified amount in FY 25 to seed the new fund.

B&F understands the intent of this measure as it establishes a broad framework to:

1) commission an actuarial study of the capitalization amount of the proposed WRF necessary to manage claims arising from catastrophic wildfires; 2) collect contributions from governmental entities and utilities; and 3) make payments to eligible claimants. B&F is willing to work with its sister departments and agencies and the Legislature to advance the purposes of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



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On the following measure:
H.B. 2700, RELATING TO WILDFIRES

Chair Ichiyama, Chair Nakashima, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Michael Angelo, and I am the Executive Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Division of Consumer Advocacy (DCA). The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and appropriate funds.

The Maui wildfire resulted in tragic losses of life, personal injuries, and property damage. The pain of that tragedy will be felt for generations. We must take decisive action to eliminate the possibility of such tragic outcomes from recurring by focusing on mitigating the risks from natural hazards.

This bill proposes establishing a fund that the state, electric utilities, public utilities that contribute to the risk of occurrence or severity of a catastrophic wildfire, other

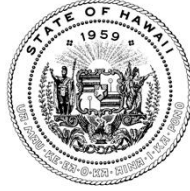
government entities, and private landowners may participate in. The money within the fund would then potentially cover future claims related to property damage arising out of a future catastrophic wildfire.

While the Department appreciates that this proposal seeks to address the stability of the investor and electric utility, the Department has significant concerns about this bill in its current form. Most prominently, this bill requires that an investor-owned utility's contributions shall be recovered from its customers in rate increases unless the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) finds that imprudent conduct by the investor-owned utility caused the catastrophic wildfire.

The DCA believes that the burden of this financial risk for property damage resulting from the actions or inaction (except for conduct found to be imprudent by the Commission) or systems of investor-owned utilities should not summarily be placed upon its customers as opposed to its shareholders.

Therefore, the Department cannot support this bill in its current form. However, we do not oppose this bill moving forward so that discussions with the key affected stakeholders may continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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On the following measure:
H.B. 2700, RELATING TO WILDFIRES.

Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Nadine Ando and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("Department") The Department offers comments on this bill.

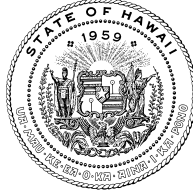
The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage claims resulting from future catastrophic wildfires. The devastating effects of the Maui wildfires have highlighted the urgent need to address the increased risks associated with climate change in our region. We appreciate the gravity of the situation and the importance of finding sustainable solutions to safeguard lives, homes and businesses in the future.

Although the Department acknowledges the importance of planning for and mitigating the impacts of catastrophic wildfires and are open to the concept of establishing a relief fund that would be housed within the Department, we would like to

express our reservations and concerns regarding the current proposal set forth in H.B. 2700.

The proposed Hawai`i wildfire relief fund and corporation as outlined in the bill will be charged with administering fund contributions that may come from the State, electric utilities, public utilities that contribute to the risk or severity of a catastrophic wildfire, other government entities and private landowners who own at least 1,000 acres in Hawai`i. The purpose of the wildfire relief fund is to process eligible claims for property damage resulting from future catastrophic wildfires. Notably, however, the current proposal does not address the means or the mechanisms to compensate for claims of property damage arising out of the recent devastating Maui wildfires. The Department believes that a more comprehensive proposal from key stakeholders such as the electric utility, is needed to better assess the feasibility and effectiveness of any proposed measure relating to property damage compensation and risk exposure.

The Department remains committed to contributing constructively to the development of legislation that ensures the safety and well-being of our communities and is grateful for the opportunity to offer comments on this bill.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committees on Water & Land and Consumer Protection & Commerce

Friday, February 2, 2024

2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

With Comments

H.B. No. 2700, Relating to Wildfires

Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and members of the House Committees on Water & Land and Consumer Protection & Commerce:

The Office of the Governor offers the following comments on H.B. No. 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

H.B. No. 2700 establishes the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and would appropriate funding.

The Maui wildfire resulted in unbearable loss of lives, homes, infrastructure, and businesses. This tragic event is a wake-up call that due to climate changes, the risk of catastrophic wildfires, along with other natural disasters in Hawaii has increased.

The Office of the Governor sees this proposal as one of a few important pieces of legislation that needs to be explored as our state figures out how to stabilize our electric utility and our energy future. The bill proposes to establish a fund that the state, the electric utility, telecom companies and private landowners may contribute to a relief fund that would then potentially cover future claims arising out of a catastrophic future wildfire.

While the Office of the Governor is open to this concept, we do not feel like there is sufficient detail in this proposal, and do not currently see a full comprehensive package from the electric utility on how to resolve past claims before we believe it would be prudent for the state to commit to an approach on future claims.

Therefore, we cannot support this bill currently. However, we do not oppose this bill moving forward so that we may continue our discussions with the electric utility and other key affected stakeholders.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Hawaii State Legislature
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
House Committee on Water and Land

January 31, 2024

Filed via electronic testimony submission system

RE: HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires - NAMIC's Testimony in Opposition

Thank you for providing the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC) an opportunity to submit written testimony to your committee for the February 2, 2024, public hearing. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the public hearing, because of a previously scheduled professional obligation.

The National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC) membership includes more than 1,500 member companies. The association supports regional and local mutual insurance companies on main streets across America and many of the country's largest national insurers. NAMIC member companies write over \$1.8 billion in annual premiums.

NAMIC and its members support the public policy objective of addressing the societal dangers wildfires pose to the physical safety and financial stability of citizens of the State of Hawaii. We believe that a collaborative partnership between interested stakeholders is essential. As we have all painfully learned in Hawaii and throughout the western United States, in recent years, wildfire mitigation risk management is of paramount importance to the health and safety of homeowners and communities. Consequently, we are concerned that the proposed legislation does not address wildfire fuel reduction and risk mitigation management practices of utilities companies, who by their very business nature need to be vigilant in their efforts to mitigate risk and prevent wildfires from starting. Instead of focusing upon vegetation management planning and wildfire risk reduction, HB 2700 focuses upon reducing liability exposure for utilities.

Although NAMIC appreciates the liability exposure concerns and litigation challenges that exist for utilities, we do not believe that the proposed legislation is in the best interest of insurance consumers, so we are opposed to the legislation for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed legislation is likely to create consumer confusion that could adversely impact a consumer's ability to protect their legal rights.**

HB 2700 requires homeowners to "opt-out" of the Wildfire Relief Fund, arguably, at each and every property tax payment renewal cycle or they will be automatically included within the purview of Fund, with all the legal implications of being a participant

in the fund. This is concerning for a number of due process of law legal reasons and problematic from a public policy perspective. First, a homeowner may not even appreciate that they need to make a formal decision and “opt-out” of the Wildfire Relief Fund (hereinafter “Fund”). Notice, even conspicuous notice, within the property tax assessment invoice is questionable legal notice, at best, especially when failure to affirmatively act upon the notice could prejudice a homeowner’s legal right to pursue a future claim against a tortfeasor whose negligence could have adversely impacted their home. A homeowner’s ability to protect one of their most valuable assets should not hinge upon them identifying the legal notice within their tax assessment document, understand the legal implications of not “opting out” of a new and complex Fund, and then timely effectuating an “opt-out” activity.

Second, homeowners are going to be provided with limited information about the specific details of the organizational and operational requirements of participating in and submitting a claim to the Fund and the legal implications of participating in the Fund (i.e. how this participation in the Fund interacts with and impacts their private homeowner’s insurance coverage protection). How is forcing homeowner’s into making a prompt decision on “opting-out” of the Fund when they have limited information about the legal implications of their action or inaction in the best interest of citizens of the state? One could argue that the likely result of this “opt out” requirement is that many homeowners will be unknowingly or unintentionally turned into participants in the Fund. Informed and intentional participation is always preferable to uninformed and unintentional participation.

2) **HB 2700 would provide utilities with a mechanism to reduce their legal liability exposure without requiring them to engage in any proactive, pro-consumer protection wildfire risk mitigation management.**

Although the bill is intended to reduce litigation costs and better allocate utilities’ liability settlement resources to homeowners after a wildfire, the practical reality of the situation is that HB 2700 is predominantly a utilities liability exposure reduction bill for the benefit of the utilities. It creates a complex process (the bill itself is 44 pages, and the regulations and operating agreement necessary for the creation and administration of the Wildfire Relief Fund Corporation will likely be considerably longer and more complex) whereby homeowners may end up unknowingly waiving, in advance, their legal right to sue an at-fault utilities company in exchange for a promise of a fractional payout of their personal and property damages caused by a utilities’ legal negligence. How is this pro-consumer protection and not pro-utilities protection?

Additionally, the bill treats insured homeowners and uninsured homeowners differently as to the legal protections the Fund provides to them. This seems to raise due process of law and equal protection of law legal issues rife with potential for legal challenge.

3) **The proposed legislation creates an unworkable legal relationship for homeowners' insurance companies.**

The proposed legislation requires insurer to prospectively “opt-in” to the Fund before they even know what their claims liability exposure is or what the Fund Corporation’s legal determination of a utilities’ legal liability is on a particular wildfire. In effect, insurers would be forced to make a prospective legal and business decision that could adversely impact their future insurance rates for consumers without complete information about the Fund Corporation’s wildfire liability determination. Settlements are typically made after the parties to a legal claim have information about the scope and valuation of the damages, not before.

Additionally, the very relationship between the Fund and the homeowner could put the insurer and its policyholder in a legally challenging position. Insurers pay the policyholder’s claim and then they are contractually assigned the policyholder’s legal right to pursue the at-fault party that caused the damages. If the policyholder adversely impacts the insurer’s right to subrogate against the at-fault party, the policyholder is in breach of the insuring agreement. HB 2700, especially with its homeowner “opt out” requirement, could expose homeowners to a situation where they are violating the terms of their homeowner’s insurance policy and thereby jeopardizing their insurance protection coverages.

NAMIC appreciates that the proponent’s of the bill are attempting to come up with a creative and novel approach to address the liability exposure of utilities for the benefit of all interested stakeholders, but HB 2700 is not the answer. It is rife with legal and public policy problems that are unfair to consumers and likely to lead to protracted litigation over the legal implications of this confusing and unclear Wildfire Relief Fund.

For the aforementioned reasons, NAMIC asks for a No Vote on HB 2700.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at 303.907.0587 or at crataj@namic.org, if you would like to discuss NAMIC’s written testimony.

Respectfully,



Christian John Rataj, Esq.
NAMIC Senior Regional Vice President
State Government Affairs, Western Region

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Hawai‘i Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation; Public Utilities Commission; Catastrophic Wildfire

BILL NUMBER: HB 2700, SB 3344

INTRODUCED BY: HB by SAIKI; SB by RICHARDS, CHANG, DECOITE, FEVELLA, FUKUNAGA, GABBARD, HASHIMOTO, INOUE, KEOHOKALOLE, MCKELVEY, SHIMABUKURO, Kidani, Kim, San Buenaventura, Wakai

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Hawai‘i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State.

SYNOPSIS: Amends the HRS by adding a new chapter. The new chapter would establish the Wildfire Relief Fund and an associated quasi-government Wildfire Relief Fund Corporation. The entity is charged with administering a voluntary program for wildfire victims to apply for a payment from the fund in exchange for releasing from liability the entities that had contributed to the fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024.

STAFF COMMENTS: Our comments are contained in our publication of November 30, 2023, entitled “The Lahaina Recovery Fund,” reprinted below.

The Lahaina Recovery Fund

One of the more innovative items announced by the Governor’s office when it comes to disaster relief measures is the creation of a Lahaina Recovery Fund.

In a press release announcing the measure, the Governor’s Office said that the concept was similar to the 9/11 Fund created in the aftermath of the destruction of the World Trade Center. The idea is that the government, Hawaiian Electric, Kamehameha Schools, and others who might be facing lawsuits would pay into the fund. Claimants who want a distribution from the fund agree not to sue the fund contributors.

It was a controversial enough plan that the Star-Advertiser conducted an informal “Big Q” online poll to see if its readers thought the fund was a good idea. (As of this writing, supporters were a little more than twice the number of detractors.)

Typical of the opposition was this post on X: “So in other words, what our state government deems is the value of your loss is all you will receive because you sign your rights away to sue for more?!? DON’T DO IT #LAHAINA!”

In a previous column, we urged the government to create this type of fund. The primary advantages are (1) claimants get money in months, not years; (2) claimants typically won’t have

to contend with attorneys' fees, which could otherwise be a huge amount like a third of the recovery; and (3) people can get on with their lives instead of worrying about discovery, depositions, trial, and possible appeals.

The fund being proposed has a voluntary participation element, like many class actions. If someone thinks that they can get a better result by suing, they are certainly free to do so. And even for folks who sue, it's tough to get past the idea that the payment will "be a payment of the State's choosing." After all, if there is a settlement of any kind (90% of litigated court cases are settled), the government will have to sign off on the payment because it would be a defendant in the litigation.

Those who want to be purists about it would need to settle in for the long haul. Take-no-prisoners litigation would need at least a couple of years to get to trial. Many more years could be added to that if appeals follow. Those purists will be waiting a long time for their money.

So, how much is each participant going to get if they opt into the fund? The exact amount isn't known at this point. This is because negotiations are still ongoing with the potential defendants who would be putting money into the fund, and folks don't yet have a clear idea of how many people would be participating. This is not unusual even for mass tort litigation and other class actions. The Governor says that the amount per participant will be north of \$1 million. Obviously, this is not a case where the government is trying to get people to sign off for a pittance like 20 bucks in some preloaded gift card. This is serious money and should be considered by the claimants seriously.

People who are thinking about being a possible claimant of the fund need to thoughtfully consider the dollar amount, whether the claimant could do better if he or she filed a lawsuit, and the cost of that lawsuit. Attorneys don't come cheap, and a "contingency fee" where the attorney is paid only if there is a recovery may cost a third (or more) of the total recovery. Add to that the uncertainty of when, or if, litigation recovery will be paid. The recovery fund, in contrast, will be ready to pay out in months, not years.

Maui claimants can be the adults in the room. They can and should make their own choices about their own future. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to a Lahaina claim. We congratulate the Governor's office for putting this option on the table.

Digested: 1/31/2024



**Hawaiian
Electric**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND
AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

Friday, February 2, 2024

2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Jason Benn
Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer
Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chair Ichiyama & Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Poepoe and Vice Chair Sayama,
and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jason Benn, Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer for Hawaiian Electric and I am testifying in **strong support** of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires. HB 2700 would create a statewide wildfire relief fund to compensate property owners, insurers, and government entities for property damage resulting from future catastrophic wildfires, regardless of who or what caused them. As we so painfully learned on August 8, 2023, the impacts of climate change, combined with the changing uses of land in Hawaii, are creating a whole-of-society problem. HB 2700 is part of that whole-of-society solution.

HB 2700 does not apply to claims arising from the August 8 event. Rather, it is intended to help protect the people of Hawaii and our economy by providing

compensation for property damage should another catastrophic wildfire occur in the future. In short, if passed HB 2700 would:

- Provide expedited compensation to property owners for uninsured losses— with no up-front out of pocket costs, and without the need for time-consuming, costly, and uncertain litigation.
- Provide compensation to state and local governments for losses, including the costs of fire suppression and damage to infrastructure.
- Reimburse property insurers a percentage of their payments to their policyholders. Again, this would be accomplished through an expedited, low-cost, non-litigation process.

Other noteworthy features of HB 2700 include:

- The fund would pay regardless of the cause. If a fire is caused by arson, fireworks, trash fires or natural events, or where a fire cannot be legally attributed to a financially capable party, property owners have no recourse to recover their uninsured losses. This bill seeks to address that, while also eliminating costly and lengthy litigation.
- Contributors to the Fund would be the State, electric utilities, large landowners, and counties, if those entities voluntarily choose to participate.
- Beneficiaries who chose to participate, such as property owners and property insurers, would not be able to sue those who contribute to the Fund. Contributors, for their part, would provide funds available to compensate beneficiaries no matter the cause of a catastrophic fire—pooling their resources to provide a financial backstop regardless of fault. At the same time, the bill includes a process to hold contributors accountable if they are found to have caused or contributed to the spread of fire, by means of a reimbursement to the fund.
- All property owners that do not opt out of the program via their annual property tax assessment would be participants. That feature makes it possible for the Fund to cover all catastrophic wildfires regardless of fault.

The Fund not only provides compensation to property owners and insurers; it also helps the State and individuals avoid the costs and burdens of litigation, as well as the financial instability that can result from litigation due to catastrophic wildfires. The

State has a strong interest in avoiding that outcome. Electric utilities, for example, invest hundreds of millions of dollars every year in our State to help achieve its energy policy objectives. These include renewable energy, decarbonization, resilience and the availability of safe, reliable, and secure service to our customers, including other critical infrastructure providers, such as hospitals and the Department of Defense.

Furthermore, the scope of a catastrophic wildfire is the result of a number of factors, including climate change and land management practices, that are not the fault of any single entity. The Fund equitably shares the burden of these factors that can lead to a catastrophic wildfire, promoting the public's interest in ensuring that our critical infrastructure providers, including electric utilities, remain able to raise the capital needed to invest in our State.

In order to continue to be able to make these large upfront investments, the utility must eliminate the financial uncertainty of future wildfire risks and regain access to capital. We believe this bill and investments Hawaiian Electric and others will make to mitigate wildfire risk, will help do so.

In sum, HB 2700 provides a low-cost and rapid process to compensate property owners and insurance companies and avoids the uncertainty of litigation that can financially destabilize utilities, large landowners, and government entities. Solving the impacts of climate change on our State must be addressed collectively and collaboratively.

On behalf of the 2,600 employees and the generations of Hawaiian Electric employees who have faithfully served our community for 132 years, mahalo for allowing me to testify in support of this important bill. Please pass HB 2700.



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII
The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Committees on
Water and Land and Consumer Protection and Commerce
Friday, February 2, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference**

RE: HB 2700 HD1 Relating to Wildfires

Aloha Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") offers testimony in general support of HB 2700 which establishes a wildfire relief fund to ensure financial resources are available to support Hawaii residents that may be impacted by a future natural disaster. This bill would create an efficient process for recovering property damages and would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII
HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND and CONSUMER
PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

FEBRUARY 2, 2024

HB 2700, RELATING TO WILDFIRES

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HB 2700, relating to wildfires. Pursuant to the “Public Safety and Disaster and Emergency Preparedness” section of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i platform, the party supports “policy that protects the people of Hawai'i and their property against natural and man-made disasters,” and “believes that climate change is real, affirms human activity as its primary cause and main driver, and supports emergency preparedness and planning efforts to mitigate its impacts.”

Last year, we witnessed the impact of the climate emergency on our shores. On August 8, 2023, wildfires swept across Maui and killed at least 100 people, making it one of the nation's deadliest natural disasters. The spread of the fires has been attributed to climate change conditions, such as unusually dry landscapes and the confluence of a strong high-pressure system to the north and Hurricane Dora to the south.

The wildfires destroyed over 2,200 structures, including numerous residential buildings, historic landmarks, and school facilities. In September 2023, a report from the United States Department of Commerce estimated

the total economic damage of the wildfires to be roughly \$5.5 billion. According to a report issued by the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization on September 22, 2023, the unemployment rate on Maui was expected to soar above 11 percent by the end of 2023 and remain above 4 percent through 2026. A total of 10,448 new claims for unemployment in Maui County were filed in the four weeks following the wildfires, about 9,900 more than the preceding four weeks. Displaced families and workers who lost their jobs are still attempting to recover from the disaster, with a full recovery expected to take many years to achieve.

Accordingly, we must do all we can to prevent tragedies like this from occurring again on our shores, including by establishing the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in our state. We must take steps to ensure that property insurance remains available to cover losses associated with wildfires by providing benefits to property insurers and preventing investment in Hawai'i's public utilities from becoming too financially risky for such utilities to raise the necessary capital to implement plans to mitigate wildfire and natural emergency management plans.

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency released an updated State Hazard Mitigation Plan last November, in which the state's wildfire risk level soared 74 percent to 6.6 from its previous level of 3.8 in the 2018 draft of the report. Wildfires are now designated as the top hazard in the state according to the updated HIEMA report. It is incumbent upon policymakers to respond with urgency to keep our communities safe.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 679-7454
kriscoffield@gmail.com

Abby Simmons

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 352-6818
abbyalana808@gmail.com



Testimony Before the House Committees on
Water & Land and Consumer Protection & Commerce
Friday, February 2, 2024; 2:00 pm
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96813

House Bill No. 2700 - RELATING WILDFIRES

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Kaua'i Chamber to express our views on House Bill 2700, which is aimed at addressing the significant issue of wildfires in our state. At first glance, the intentions behind HB 2700 seem commendable and aligned with the state's best interests in minimizing the impact of wildfires and ensuring residents have access to compensation for damages.

However, our member, the Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC), has raised valid concerns regarding the potential unintended consequences this bill may have, especially on Kaua'i where Hawaiian Electric (HECO) does not operate. KIUC's testimony highlights the unique challenges and financial implications that the bill could impose on utilities and stakeholders outside of HECO's operational area. Their concerns underscore the need for a more inclusive consultation process to ensure that the diverse needs and circumstances of all stakeholders are adequately considered.

We strongly urge the committees to work closely with KIUC and other stakeholders to address these concerns. It is crucial that any legislative action taken does not inadvertently create negative impacts on the neighbor islands and their residents. By engaging in constructive dialogue and seeking collaborative solutions, we can achieve a balanced approach that benefits all parties involved.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to a resolution that safeguards our communities while also respecting the operational realities of utilities across all islands.

Sincerely,

Mark Perriello
President & CEO



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

HEARING DATE: Friday, February 2, 2024
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
PLACE: State Capitol
Conference Room 329

RE: Testimony in **Support** of House Bill 2700

Aloha Honorable Chair(s) Ichiyama/Nakashima, Vice Chair(s) Poepoe/Sayama, and Members of the Joint-Committee;

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1260 (IBEW 1260) would like to respectfully offer the following testimony in **Support** of House Bill 2700.

IBEW 1260 is comprised of approximately 3,000 members representing Hawaii's electric utility companies as well as government service contracts, and media throughout Hawaii, Guam, and Wake Island. Our large part of our membership are made up of a diverse local workforce of dedicated, highly skilled, and trained individuals working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to generate, transmit, and distribute electricity throughout Hawai'i and to ensure the reliability and resiliency of this precious resource.

IBEW 1260 supports House Bill 2700 which establishes the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from future catastrophic wildfires in the State.

House Bill 2700 seeks to establish a streamline process to provide mitigative relief and economic stability to all who would be affected by future catastrophic events. Recent events have magnified the tragic harm that can befall an entire community by such occurrences, and how critical such processes and financial backstops are in preventing economic uncertainty and ensuring continued stability and viability of Hawai'i's major institutions.

The electric utility and infrastructure that Hawaiian Electric provides is vital to our community, and to our members and their families. As a local company, tracing its roots back to Hawai'i's monarchy, HECO has been a generous corporate partner and philanthropic contributor to our community and provides valuable and sustainable careers to many of Hawai'i's local residents. In a time when cost of living, housing, and affordability...especially here in Hawai'i, is at the forefront of most public policy discussions, it is important that we give great effort and consideration to policy that aims to prevent added harm from future events like what occurred recently on Maui, as well as processes to ensure Hawai'i's vital industries like HECO, remain viable and able to continue to serve our community as it has for over a century.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter, we look forward to working with you on this and other important matters going forward.



SanHi

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

DATE: February 2, 2024

TO: Representative Linda Ichiyama
Chair, Committee on Water & Land

Representative Mark M. Nakashima
Chair, Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

FROM: Matt Tsujimura

RE: **H.B. 2700 – Relating to Wildfires**
Hearing Date: Friday, February 2, 2024 at 2:00PM
Conference Room: 329

Dear Chair Ichiyama, Chair Nakashima, and Members of the joint Committees on Water & Land and Consumer Protection & Commerce:

I am Matt Tsujimura, representing State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company (State Farm). State Farm offers this testimony **in opposition** to H.B. 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

H.B. 2700 establishes the Hawaii Wildfire Relief Fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State.

H.B. 2700 does not protect consumers. Participating in the Wildfire Relief Fund would result in the property owner never being made whole. Instead, the proposal asks property owners and insurers to waive rights before a loss has occurred and the extent of the damage and liability is known. It requires property owners to participate in the fund unless they “opt out.” If the property owner does not affirmatively “opt out,” the only source of recovery against a negligent party is a pre-determined amount (uninsured property owner) or a percentage (insured property owner) of their overall loss. A property owner who failed to “opt out” may unknowingly waive their individual right to seek damages from a negligent party and which may also impact an insurer’s subrogation rights.¹

Insurers are required to “opt-in” to participate in the proposed Wildfire Relief Fund and, if they do so, the recovery is limited to a percentage predetermined by the fund. The proposal essentially asks an insurer to assess liability and likelihood of potential recovery before the event has occurred, a time when the facts, circumstances, and identity of the responsible parties is unknown.

¹ Subrogation supports a critical public policy purpose of ensuring the party who caused the loss bears the financial burden for the damage caused.

Surprisingly, H.B. 2700 does not appear to *require* any type of wildfire mitigation plan by contributing entities to prevent catastrophic wildfire events. Rather, the proposal gives the public utilities commission, the fund administrator, or other state agency the ability to determine if the conduct was “prudent.”² While unlikely, this could enable contributing entities to pay into the fund to significantly limit their liability while limiting other types of preventative wildfire measures they could take due to the protection offered by being a fund contributor.

Ultimately, State Farm is concerned this proposal is detrimental to consumers and does little to help mitigate wildfire losses, while allowing the responsible parties to limit liability for their wrongful conduct.

For these reasons we offer this testimony in opposition. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

² Investor-owned utilities who have a wildfire mitigation plan approved by the public utilities commission are deemed to have been “prudent” unless a party to the proceeding creates doubt as to the conduct.



Testimony Before the House Committees on Water & Land and Consumer Protection & Commerce

By David Bissell
President and Chief Executive Officer
Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative
4463 Pahe'e Street, Suite 1, Līhu'e, Hawai'i, 96766-2000

Friday, February 2, 2024; 2:00 pm
Conference Room #329 & Videoconference

House Bill No. 2700 - RELATING WILDFIRES

To the Honorable Chairs Linda Ichiyama and Mark M. Nakashima; Honorable Vice Chairs Mahina Poepoe and Jackson D. Sayama; and Members of the Committees:

Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) is a not-for-profit utility providing electrical service to more than 34,000 commercial and residential members.

KIUC offers comments on this measure.

KIUC shares the legislature's concern regarding the risks posed by catastrophic wildfires and the potential impact to the health, safety and financial security of residents and businesses throughout the state. KIUC agrees that it is in the best interest of the state to minimize the impact of potential litigation following catastrophic events, and ensure residents have access to compensation for property damage resulting from wildfires.

The establishment of a Wildfire Relief Fund could have significant financial impacts, both positive and negative, on residents, businesses, utilities, government agencies and other stakeholders. KIUC believes the needs and circumstances of each of these stakeholders is diverse and should be considered prior to acting on this legislation. Without access to background on studies or other information used to develop this complex proposal, we have concerns about the bill's potential negative impact to KIUC. In order to support the establishment of a Wildfire Relief Fund, KIUC would need much more information on costs and potential benefits of participating, both initially and ongoing.

The preamble to HB 2700 states that the measure is designed in part to "...ensure that the threat of wildfires does not make investment in Hawaii's public utilities so financially risky that it becomes too costly or impossible for them to raise capital to implement vital plans, including plans to mitigate wildfire risk, and to provide safe, reliable, and affordable service to the people of the State."

While this is undoubtedly a consideration for an investor-owned utility such as Hawaiian Electric (HECO), a cooperative such as KIUC does not bear anywhere near the same amount of investment risk. Because KIUC has no shareholders and is therefore considered to be part of the public power universe of electric utilities, KIUC

would have access to funding assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the event of a wildfire, and it is likely that FEMA would cover 75% of KIUC's rebuild costs following a major catastrophic event. Additionally, as a cooperative, KIUC has access to low-cost capital through the U.S.D.A. Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which would likely be a lower interest rate source of debt capital than even AAA-rated securitized bonds. If RUS debt is unavailable, KIUC would seek capital from one of our cooperative lenders, such as the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation or CoBank.

In light of these concerns and, in the event this bill moves forward, KIUC suggests the following amendments:

Amendment 1: Page 17, line 7: "potential contributors, other than the State and investor-owned electric"

Amendment 2: Page 18, line 18: "(3) From investor-owned electric utilities, \$; and"

Amendment 3: Page 21, Line 9: "amount to be paid by each contributing electric utility, other"

Amendment 4: Page 22, line 17: "(k) Utility Contribution. An investor-owned or cooperative utility's"

Amendments 1, 2 and 3 allow KIUC the option of becoming a contributor if, after further review, participation in the Wildfire Relief Fund is found to have a net benefit to KIUC and its rate-payer members. Amendment 4 gives KIUC parity with HECO in allowing the utility to recover fund contribution costs from its customers in rates, unless the public utilities commission directs otherwise.

In summary, we ask that you fully evaluate the potential impacts to KIUC in your decision-making.

Thank you for your consideration.



OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL UNION No. 3

2181 LAUWILIWILI STREET, KAPOLEI, HI 96707 • (808) 845-7871 • FAX (808) 682-0906
Jurisdiction: Northern California, Northern Nevada, Utah, Hawaii, and the Mid-Pacific Islands

February 1, 2024

Honorable, Linda Ichiyama, House Committee on Water & Land, Chair
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Water & Land
Honorable, Mark Nakashima, House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, Chair
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

RE: HB 2700 RELATING TO HOUSING

Chair Ichiyama & Chair Nakashima,

My name is Ana Tuiasosopo. I am the District Representative and Trustee for Operating Engineers Local 3. We are the largest Construction Trades Local in the United States. I and the members of Operating Engineers Local 3 support HB 2700.

We support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

We humbly ask for your support and approval of HB 2700.

Sincerely,

Ana Tuiasosopo
Hawaii District Representative, Trustee
Hawaii Operating Engineers Local 3



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Friday, February 2, 2024 — 2:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports the intent of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Dear Chair Ichiyama, Chair Nakashima, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports the intent of HB 2700, which establishes the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State, but shares some comments for the committee's consideration.

Hawai'i's unique communities and ecosystems are increasingly threatened by the devastating impacts of wildfires. In recent years, we have witnessed a rise in the frequency and intensity of wildfires, exacerbated by climate change, land and water management practices, and urban encroachment into fire-prone areas. The culmination of these forces resulted in the devastating and heartbreaking destruction seen on Maui last year.

It is undisputed that it is important to prepare for increased risks from wildfires, and to ensure that loss and damage caused by wildfires are addressed. The establishment of the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation could be an important opportunity to address the financial aftermath of such disasters. This initiative can help serve as a safety net for those affected, ensuring that residents have the support they need to rebuild their lives and homes without the overwhelming burden of financial insecurity.

While many may view such a bill as a benefit to existing electric utilities, it is important to note that any business will struggle with unlimited liability, making access to capital difficult or more expensive and constraining a business' ability to make much needed investments in the interim.¹ Furthermore, there is a very real risk that utilities may be unable to adequately insure against future climate related disasters, such as wildfires, and will increasingly rely on new approaches to

¹ As stated by the Hawaiian Electric Companies in its January 31, 2023, filing with the Public Utilities Commission, "Maui Electric is aware of 100 complaints related to the August 2023 Maui wildfires that assert claims against Maui Electric. One complaint is pending in the First Circuit Court in O'ahu, 19 complaints are pending in the Second Circuit Court in Maui County, and 80 complaints are pending in the U.S. District Court. for the District of Hawai'i." See Non-Docketed Case No. 2023-04643 Maui Electric Monthly Wildfire-Related Litigation Report January 2024.

<https://shareus11.springcm.com/Public/DownloadNative/25256/e52ef351-84c0-ee11-b83e-48df377ef808/0b5fa85f-a9c0-ee11-b83e-48df377ef808>

risk mitigation.² UluPono recognizes the multifaceted challenges facing the electric utilities, including the need to address ongoing potential wildfire liability while aggressively pursuing the state's policy goals of increasing clean energy, improving grid reliability and resiliency, and reducing costs for customers. As such, a measure such as this bill can help establish an approach going forward that would place boundaries around potential liability, while ensuring a pool of resources to help aid in future recovery needs. This is not a perfect solution—there are tradeoffs to be sure—but, on the whole, UluPono considers this a net positive for the state. There are a few elements worth noting from the bill as currently drafted:

The measure only covers property damage, not loss of lives: The bill does not attempt to place any limitations on the liability of loss of life, only focusing on loss of property. UluPono recognizes that such limitations are reasonable, by not constraining liability for the most sensitive and difficult type of loss.

A wildfire relief fund would reduce barriers to entry for potential third-party buyers of the electric utility: A financial support structure will reduce risk for potential investors in an investor-owned utility, thereby making it a more favorable opportunity.

Fund Recovery in Rates: As the bill is currently drafted, the utility can recover for contributions made to the wildfire relief fund through its rates, unless the utility's actions were found to be outside the scope of its pre-approved wildfire mitigation plan. While recovery for fund contributions through rates is less than ideal, if the fund is considered akin to an insurance policy, then utility customers already pay for utility insurance, and such a fund would only increase its coverage for wildfire damage.

UluPono offers the following comments/suggestions to improve the bills effectiveness:

Determination of Total Risk and Contributions: As currently drafted, the bill proposes to determine the total potential wildfire risk and determine the apportionment of contributions from fund members using an actuarial methodology. Such an approach should be better defined, as it is unclear how the apportionment between entities would be established without significant challenges from participants and stakeholders—which could lead to the delay in development of the fund and potentially slow down or inhibit the effectiveness of the fund.

Liability for Employee Error: As currently drafted, the bill protects funders from liability due to employee error, which should be modified to include what is legally applicable under normal employer/employee liability scenarios.

20% Cap on Transmission and Distribution Equity Rate Base: As currently drafted, the Public Utilities Commission, upon a finding of imprudence, is prohibited from ordering the investor-owned utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in an amount that exceeds the lesser of:

- (1) The costs that the Public Utilities Commission determines were due to the investor-owned utility's imprudence; or
- (2) Twenty per cent of the investor-owned utility's transmission and distribution equity rate

² **As wildfires losses mount, will commercial insurers decline to cover utilities?** *Utility Dive*, January 31, 2024. <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/wildfire-utility-grid-insurance-climate-pge-xcel-hawaiian-electric/703178/>



base minus the amounts the utility has reimbursed, or is required to reimburse, the wildfire relief fund during the period of three consecutive calendar years ending on December 31 of the year in which the calculation is being performed.

It is unclear whether the 20% cap on investor-owned utility's transmission and distribution equity rate base is a reasonable amount to place such a limitation. The concern would be that such a limitation would in fact be the lesser of the two potential amounts to such an extreme degree that the liability would far outstrip the cap. Further evaluation and analysis should be conducted in concert with the investor-owned utility to determine if this amount is prudent.

10% Cap on Hawai'i-Based Assets for Other Fund Contributors: On a similar note, other fund participants, such as a cooperative utility, another governmental entity, or a private landowner that is a contributor that may have caused the occurrence or contributed to the severity of a catastrophic wildfire, are subject to a cap of 10% of the contributor's assets within Hawai'i, measured over a rolling three-year period. While such a construct may work for some entities, other entities may be significantly shielded from liability due to their limited asset holdings in Hawai'i. As such, Ulupono recommends a deeper evaluation of the proposed caps to ensure adequate coverage if a finding of imprudence is in fact determined.

Adherence to the Wildfire Risk Mitigation Plan: As currently drafted, if the investor-utility has a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the Public Utilities Commission, the investor-owned utility's conduct will be deemed to have been prudent, unless a party to the proceeding creates a serious doubt as to the prudence of the investor-owned utility's conduct. Ulupono recommends that the bill also state that the Public Utilities Commission must also determine whether the investor-owned utility was in fact acting in compliance with the approved wildfire mitigation plan, not simply whether serious doubts are raised regarding the investor-owned utility's conduct. In other words, it should not be enough to simply have a wildfire mitigation plan in place, but rather, the investor-owned utility should also be following the plan in order to determine prudence.

The establishment of the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund has the potential to help provide much-needed support and relief to those affected by wildfires in our state. By offering a reliable source of compensation, the fund will enhance the resilience of our communities, enabling quicker recovery and rebuilding efforts, and minimizing the long-term socio-economic impacts of wildfires.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND and
COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 329
Friday, February 2, 2024 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Water & Land
To The Honorable Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

SUPPORT HB2700 RELATING TO WILDFIRES

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB2700** which establishes the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State.

The Chamber supports the concept of this fund that helps protect impacted residents and businesses of future catastrophic wildfires by getting paid from the fund regardless of the cause of the wildfire. We acknowledge that it will help protect state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund from financial uncertainty by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. However, we note that residents and businesses that will benefit from this fund will also be contributors to this fund through state taxes, other governmental taxes, and as rate payers of utility companies. We all must come together on solutions when dealing with catastrophic events.

We appreciate the forward thinking of this initiative. We hope that the state would continue to explore federal and other methods of funding for expediting protective measures in order to help lessen the impacts of future disasters.

The Chamber looks forward to continued discussions on this and other related bills to find the best possible solutions.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT HB2700**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

February 1, 2024

Committee on Water and Land
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Rep. Mahina Poe Poe, Vice Chair
and
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair



Working together for Kapolei

Friday, February 2, 2024
2:00 p.m. Conference Room #329 and
via Videoconference

RE: HB2700 – Relating to Wildfires

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poe Poe and Sayama, members of the Committees,

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region including Waipahu, Kapolei, Ewa Beach, Nanakuli, Waianae and Makaha. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the entire business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and help Kapolei businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of business: small, medium or large, for profit or non-profit businesses or sole proprietorship.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce supports HB2700. Establishes the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State. Appropriates funds.

The devastation of the Maui wildfires has touched all of us and while we hope that nothing like that happens again anywhere in our State, we must be vigilant and be prepared in the case that it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. The impact on the infrastructure is a reality that is very real. Having a funding mechanism that will help protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund is a solution we must seek now.

There are portions of West O’ahu that are specifically vulnerable to devastating wildfire in a very similar manor that West Maui was. **On August 10, 2023, just two days after the devastating Maui wildfires I stood on the shores of the Waianae Coast with tears in my eyes recognizing that this could happen to our community in a blink of an eye, and we need to be prepared on all fronts.**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Joyce Chang

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Joyce Chang and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 15 years. Having worked for the company as a Senior Financial Administrator, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Ronald R Cox

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Ronald R Cox and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 15 years. Having worked for the company as an executive, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid, while minimizing rate payer costs.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Enrique Che

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Enrique Che, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 32 years. Having worked for the company as an engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 12:57:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Demko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think that a fund to pay from in the case of another fire event is necessary. It's very unfortunate to see Hawaiian Electric getting blamed for all of the events on Maui. Unfortunately, this is the world we live in. Blaming on another is the new norm. There needs to be a fund to pay out of to prevent a repeat of what we are going through now as a state. If we do not make changes, we cannot expect different results. Thank you for your time.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Caryn Fukunaga

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Caryn Fukunaga and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am an employee of Hawaiian Electric and have been employed there for over 28 years. Having worked for the company as a Manager, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jason Cosma

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jason Cosma and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am an employee of Hawaiian Electric and have been employed there for over 20 years. Having worked for the company as a Power Lineman/Cable Splicer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Dawn Hirayama

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Dawn Hirayama and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

My husband and I are employees of Hawaiian Electric I am proud to be a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our family and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Lorrie Iwanaga

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lorrie Iwanaga and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 32 years. Having worked for the company as an executive assistant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Keith Kobuke

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Keith Kobuke and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 30 years. Having worked for the company as an engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:14:59 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) administrator position, who shall be exempt from chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to support the Hawaii wildfire relief fund corporation; provided that in all subsequent fiscal years, all funding for the administrator position shall be paid from the wildfire relief fund.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of commerce and consumer affairs for the purposes of this Act.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Karen Hirota

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Karen Hirota and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 20 years. Having worked for the company as an executive assistant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jason Anzai

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jason Anzai and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a current employee of Hawaiian Electric and have been employed here for over 15 years. Having worked for the company as a Senior Supervisor – Reliability & Performance Engineering, I am proud to be a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Christopher Reynolds

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Christopher Reynolds and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 24 years. Having worked for the company as the Operational Technology Director, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Carol Hannigan

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Carol Hannigan and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Hawaiian Electric is a local company which has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Patsy Nanbu

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Patsy Nanbu and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 35 years. Having worked for the company as the Controller, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Robert Young

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Robert Young and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 42 years. Having worked for the company as an electrical engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and public utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jared Mimura

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jared Mimura and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Pam Sumimoto

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Pam Sumimoto and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Brian Nakayama]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Brian Nakayama] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Sherri-Ann Loo

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Sherri-Ann Loo and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over fifteen (15) years. Having worked for the company in several roles culminating in manager, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kenneth Chan

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kenneth Chan and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we all hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure that resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Aaron Jay]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Aaron Jay] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Shelley Takasato

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Shelley Takasato and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Having seen the devastation that the Lahaina wildfires has left behind and what the affected families are still going through I support this bill.

HB 2700 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. This bill would ensure that if another catastrophic event were to occur, a relief fund for potential victims would provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,



Shelley A.F. Takasato

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Silas Oliveira de Toledo

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Silas Oliveira de Toledo, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jilleina Winchester

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jilleina Winchester and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

Respectfully,



Jilleina Winchester

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Mami Bueno

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Mami Bueno and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Leslie Kwock

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Leslie Kwock and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. With the sad outcome of many other local companies closing after the pandemic, this local company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland, where the culture and environment does not have the same warmth as Hawai'i. I was born, raised and have a family here on O'ahu, being very grateful of this unique gift and opportunity from my parents. I would like to continue my family roots here, including the benefit of having as many local companies like Hawaiian Electric.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factors. While I hope what happened in West Mau'i never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provides Hawai'i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause – this resembles 'ohana where families are supportive and protective of each other and even extends beyond genetic bonds. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support.

**ATESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Annette Wong

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Annette Wong and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am an employee of Hawaiian Electric and am employed there for over 12 years. Having worked for the company as a Structural Engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Alton Ramos]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Alton Ramos] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a [retired employee] of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 19 years. Having worked for the company as a(n) Business Consultant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jennifer Murakami

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jennifer Murakami and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a current employee of Hawaiian Electric for over 12 years. I am proud to be a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided a great career opportunity for me who grew up here in the islands and am now raising a family of my own. I appreciate the fact that Hawaiian Electric is a company that provides our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this proposed bill will ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 5:56:53 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candace Fujikane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 2700.

I believe that the state must take measures to provide relief for families who suffer from the impact of wildfires.

I also believe that we need to support utilities who are hard hit by lawsuits in a situation where I believe developers who diverted waters from streams for multi-million dollar homes are to blame.

I would like to see those diverted waters returned to streams, and I would like to see support for utilities who serve all the people of Hawai'i.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Michelle Chang

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Michelle Chang and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Earlynn F. Maile

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Earlynn Maile and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 35 years. Having worked for the company primarily as an Engineer, Project Manager and Planner, I am very proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, and run by leadership from Hawai`i.

The company has provided career opportunities for myself and others who grew up here in the islands. I went to college on the mainland and wanted to come back to Hawai`i to live and raise my family. Hawaiian Electric made that possible. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Dawn Wong

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Dawn Wong and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Mark M. K. Suehiro

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Mark M. K. Suehiro and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company as an Electrical Engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:02:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Camille Oga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think it's important to get families, businesses, and property owners alike the aid that they need rather than placing the blame on any one party. Accidents happen and especially with global warming, wildfires have become more common than ever before. Even if one person causes a fire they can't be solely responsible for fixing the damage done by a wildfire.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kandice Kubojiri

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kandice Kubojiri and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Ellaham Toko

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Ellaham Toko and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 20 years. Having worked for the company in various positions such as Meter Reader, Lineman and Field Technical Trainer. I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Howard A. Kelly

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Howard Kelly and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Nancy T. Kelly

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Nancy Kelly and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Andrew Wong

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Andrew Wong and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for many families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. Hawaiian Electric continuously support the community through various community programs and is a vital part to our community.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Michael Ishihara

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Michael Ishihara and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric is a local company comprised of employees that live in Hawaii and are members of our communities. They have been a part of Hawaii for over 130 years. Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities, supported many community events and sponsored many activities for the schools in Hawaii. Most importantly, the company provides our younger generation with an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. Having locally owned companies, like Hawaiian Electric, allows the people of Hawaii the opportunity to work with companies that understand the islands and are more willing to collaborate with them, because they are a part of them – the residents of Hawaii.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While I hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Chris Villanueva

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Chris Villanueva and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Stacey Ishihara

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Stacey Ishihara and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric is a local company comprised of employees that live in Hawaii and are members of our communities. They have been a part of Hawaii for over 130 years. Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities, supported many community events and sponsored many activities for the schools in Hawaii. Most importantly, the company provides our younger generation with an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. Having locally owned companies, like Hawaiian Electric, allows the people of Hawaii the opportunity to work with companies that understand the islands and are more willing to collaborate with them, because they are a part of them – the residents of Hawaii.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While I hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Isaac Wong

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Isaac Wong and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for many families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. Hawaiian Electric continuously support the community through various community programs and is a vital part to our community.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jamie Lee

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jamie Lee and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company as an accountant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 11:20:50 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2700 to create a wildfire relief fund to provide monies for those affected by wildfires, regardless of cause. The aid for life under a catastrophic circumstance should not be hindered by red tape.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Lon Okada

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lon Okada and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I retired from Hawaiian Electric Industries and was employed there for over 37 years, including six years at Hawaiian Electric. Having worked for the company in the finance area, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for many who grew up here in the islands and continues to provide our younger generation with an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to mitigate the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, this bill would help bolster a utility's positive credit rating and allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Alvin Kurisu

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Alvin Kurisu and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Alden Ishii

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Alden Ishii, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 31 years. Having worked for the company in middle management (Engineering, Power Plant, and Safety) I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Noreen Takeshita

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Noreen Takeshita and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kristin Nakamura

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kristin, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

The company has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Allison Tai

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Allison Tai and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a former employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 6 years. Having worked for the company in both power supply engineering and legal departments, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Christopher Freitas

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Christopher Freitas and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Gavin Sumimoto

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Gavin Sumimoto and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Brian Tabion

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Brian Tabion and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Joanne Williamson

Honorable Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Joanne Williamson, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires. I am also an employee of Hawaiian Electric.

I support HB 2700 because it gives a future solution *when* there is the next catastrophic wildfire caused by any factor. This undoubtedly *will* occur with the changing climate, and hotter, and drier conditions. Hawaii needs to be prepared.

This bill creates a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provides Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, having such a fund protects the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. It reins in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating will allow access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 7:47:24 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
scott cramer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Scott Cramer

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Scott Cramer and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Your name]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Your name] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Aaron Sato

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Aaron Sato and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 7:51:49 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Koko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Lori Ann Koko

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lori Ann Koko and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what

happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 7:52:22 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kyle k kamaunu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony before the HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kyle Kamaunu

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kyle Kamaunu and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by alex cachero

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is alex cachero and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Stephen Baughn

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Stephen Baughn and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jodi Borges

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jodi Borges and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am an employee of Hawaiian Electric and have been employed there for over 9 years. Having worked for the company in various capacities and currently as a Land Agent, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Alexander Kufel

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Alexander Kufel and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for many families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. Hawaiian Electric continuously support the community through various community programs and is a vital part to our community.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:04:02 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Iwahashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of bill HB2700

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Your name]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Your name] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Donna P. Van Osdol

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Donna Van Osdol, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retiree of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for 30.5 years. Having worked for the company as an Executive Secretary to the Vice President-General Counsel, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, which continue to be led by local management, and Hawaii-born leadership.

The company provided me, and thousands of others, career opportunities for local families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

I wholeheartedly support HB2700, and urge you to pass this important piece of legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Melanie Higa

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Melanie Higa and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Sharon Suzuki

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Sharon Suzuki and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 28 years. Having worked for the company in various positions, most recently as President of Maui County and Hawaii Island Utilities, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families, like mine, who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Andrew Duropan

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Andrew Duropan and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kawehi Sablan

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kawehi Sablan and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Arthur Ho

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Arthur Ho and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:36:15 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Sakiko Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

<p>I support HB 2700 as it provides the residents and businesses of Hawaii an expeditious form of payment if they are involved/impacted by fire damages irregardless of the cause of fire.</p>

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kevin Kuo

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kevin Kuo and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Wade I. Hayama

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Wade I. Hayama and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a **former employee** of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 3 years. Having worked for the company as an Employee, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Keith Sakamoto

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Keith Sakamoto and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 20 years. Having worked for the company as a planner and supervisor, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Iris Eala

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Iris Eala and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric Company and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company in various positions and departments over the years, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawai`i.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai`i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Lorie Nagata

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lorie Nagata and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 36 years. Having worked for the company in its finance and accounting area, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Len Nakano

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Len Nakano and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available should another catastrophe occur. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WILDFIRES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that as the risk of
2 catastrophic wildfires in Hawaii has increased, so has the
3 threat of property damage from such fires. Although most
4 property owners have insurance, some do not, and others'
5 insurance may not fully cover their losses.

6 The legislature further finds that when the cause of a
7 wildfire is uncertain or contested, costly and protracted
8 litigation ensues. Litigation regarding wildfire damages can
9 impose massive costs, including on the State, counties,
10 utilities, landowners, and other defendants that may be alleged
11 to have contributed to catastrophic wildfires. Such costs can
12 overwhelm these major institutions of the community, undermining
13 their ability to make investments that the State needs. Indeed,
14 even the possibility of litigation regarding a future
15 catastrophic wildfire can create a cloud of uncertainty that
16 threatens to impair the ability of these entities to attract
17 capital on reasonable terms--capital that is vital to make



1 investments in wildfire prevention, among other priorities.

2 Such an outcome harms everyone.

3 The legislature also finds that the risk of property damage
4 stemming from catastrophic wildfires may lead property insurers
5 to raise rates or refuse to provide coverage for certain losses,
6 or certain high-risk areas, of Hawaii--as occurred in the wake
7 of hurricane Iniki with respect to hurricanes.

8 The legislature additionally finds that it is in the public
9 interest to take steps to ensure that property insurance remains
10 available to cover losses associated with wildfires by providing
11 benefits to property insurers. Furthermore, the legislature
12 finds that it is in the public interest to ensure that the
13 threat of wildfires does not make investment in Hawaii's public
14 utilities so financially risky that it becomes too costly or
15 impossible for them to raise capital to implement vital plans,
16 including plans to mitigate wildfire risk, and to provide safe,
17 reliable, and affordable service to the people of the State.

18 Moreover, the legislature finds that it is in the public
19 interest to avoid the costs of litigation arising out of
20 catastrophic wildfires in order to protect Hawaii's economy and
21 encourage investment in the State. Therefore, the purpose of



1 this Act is to serve the public interest in the event of a
2 devastating wildfire by establishing a response to provide
3 compensation for property damage resulting from wildfires,
4 regardless of cause.

5 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
6 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
7 as follows:

8 **"CHAPTER**

9 **WILDFIRE RELIEF FUND**

10 § -1 **Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

11 "Administrator" means the wildfire relief fund
12 administrator appointed pursuant to section -5.

13 "Board" means the wildfire relief fund board of directors
14 created pursuant to section -4.

15 "Catastrophic wildfire" means a wildfire occurring on or
16 after the effective date of this Act that damages or destroys
17 more than five hundred residential or commercial structures.

18 "Contributor" means any person who contributes to the
19 wildfire relief fund as provided in section -3.



1 "Cooperative utility" means a public utility owned by
2 customers and overseen by a board of directors elected by
3 customers.

4 "Corporation" means the wildfire relief fund corporation
5 established pursuant to section -3.

6 "Electric utility" means a public utility that exists for
7 the furnishing of electrical power.

8 "Investor-owned utility" means a public utility that is
9 owned by shareholders and overseen by a board of directors
10 elected by shareholders.

11 "Other governmental entities" refers to governmental
12 entities, including county government agencies, other than state
13 government agencies.

14 "Public utility" has the same meaning as in section 269-1.

15 "Wildfire relief fund" means the wildfire relief fund
16 established pursuant to section -2.

17 "Wildfire risk management plan" means a plan approved by
18 the public utilities commission pursuant to section -9.

19 § -2 **Wildfire relief fund; establishment.** (a) There is
20 established outside the state treasury a wildfire relief fund



1 and any accounts thereunder to carry out the purposes of this
2 chapter.

3 (b) The wildfire relief fund shall be placed within the
4 department of commerce and consumer affairs for administrative
5 purposes. The fund shall be a public body corporate and
6 politic.

7 (c) Moneys deposited in the wildfire relief fund and any
8 accounts thereunder shall be held by the fund, as trustee, in a
9 depository, as defined in section 38-1, or according to a
10 similar arrangement at the discretion of the board.

11 (d) All moneys received by the wildfire relief fund
12 corporation under this chapter shall be paid immediately to the
13 director of finance and shall become a part of the wildfire
14 relief fund.

15 (e) All payments authorized to be made by the corporation
16 by this chapter, including all payments for claims for
17 catastrophic wildfire damages, all salaries, and all other
18 expenses, shall be made from the wildfire relief fund.

19 (f) The moneys in the wildfire relief fund shall be
20 invested according to the same investment plans developed for
21 the Hawaii retirement savings special fund pursuant to chapter



1 389, and the earnings from such investments shall be credited to
2 the wildfire relief fund.

3 (g) All moneys in the wildfire relief fund shall be
4 appropriated and expended exclusively for the uses and purposes
5 set forth in this chapter; provided that this section shall not
6 be deemed to amend or impair the force or effect of any law of
7 this State specifically authorizing the investment of moneys
8 from the wildfire relief fund.

9 § -3 **Wildfire relief fund corporation; establishment;**
10 **purposes; duties.** (a) The wildfire relief fund corporation is
11 hereby established as an independent public body corporate and
12 politic.

13 (b) The corporation shall be established within the
14 department of commerce and consumer affairs for administrative
15 purposes.

16 (c) The purpose of the corporation shall be to administer
17 the payment of:

18 (1) Eligible claims arising from catastrophic wildfires
19 from the wildfire relief fund; and

20 (2) Contributions of contributors to the wildfire relief
21 fund.



- 1 (d) The corporation shall:
- 2 (1) Receive, process, and determine payments for eligible
- 3 claims for property damage arising from catastrophic
- 4 wildfires from the wildfire relief fund;
- 5 (2) Determine and enforce the collection of contributions
- 6 from contributors to the wildfire relief fund;
- 7 (3) Retain, employ, or contract with officers; experts;
- 8 employees; accountants; actuaries; financial
- 9 professionals; and other advisers, consultants,
- 10 attorneys, and professionals, as may be necessary in
- 11 the administrator's judgment, for the efficient
- 12 operation, management, and administration of the
- 13 corporation;
- 14 (4) Enter into contracts and other obligations related to
- 15 the operation, management, and administration of the
- 16 corporation;
- 17 (5) Purchase insurance or take other actions to maximize
- 18 the claims-paying resources of the wildfire relief
- 19 fund;
- 20 (6) Pay costs, expenses, and other obligations of the
- 21 corporation from the wildfire relief fund's assets;



1 (7) Take any actions necessary to collect any amounts owed
2 to the wildfire relief fund; and

3 (8) Undertake such other activities as are related to the
4 operation, management, and administration of the
5 wildfire relief fund, as approved by the board.

6 § -4 Wildfire relief fund corporation; board of

7 directors. (a) There is established a wildfire relief fund
8 board of directors, which shall consist of members
9 appointed by the governor in accordance with section 26-34. The
10 board shall be the policy-making body of the corporation.

11 Accordingly, the board shall be responsible for adopting
12 policies for the administration and operation of the wildfire
13 relief fund and the performance of other duties and functions
14 assigned to the fund, to the degree not specified in this
15 chapter.

16 (b) The members of the board shall serve staggered terms,
17 with one-half of the members' initial terms ending four years
18 after the initial appointment, and one-half of the members'
19 initial terms ending six years after the initial appointment.
20 Thereafter, each member shall serve four-year terms. Vacancies



1 shall be filled for the remainder of any unexpired term in the
2 same manner as the original appointments.

3 (c) The chairperson of the board shall be elected from
4 among the appointed members of the board. A majority of all
5 members currently appointed to the board shall constitute a
6 quorum to conduct business, and the concurrence of a majority of
7 all members currently appointed to the board shall be necessary
8 to make any action valid, if not otherwise specified in this
9 chapter.

10 (d) Members of the board shall be appointed to ensure:

11 (1) A broad and balanced representation, with proper
12 judgment, character, expertise, skills, and knowledge
13 useful to the oversight of the corporation; and

14 (2) Diversity with regard to viewpoints, background, work
15 experience, and demographics.

16 The members of the board shall serve without compensation
17 but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses,
18 including travel expenses, incurred in the discharge of their
19 duties.

20 (e) The board shall meet at least once every three months
21 at a time and place determined by the board. The board shall



1 meet at such other times and places as determined by the call of
2 the chairperson or by a majority of the members of the board.

3 (f) No later than twenty days before the convening of each
4 regular session, the board shall submit to the legislature and
5 governor a report regarding the activities and operations of the
6 corporation during the preceding year. The report shall
7 include, at a minimum, a description of:

- 8 (1) The effectiveness of the wildfire relief fund's
9 claims-payment process; and
- 10 (2) The level of participation in the wildfire relief fund
11 by all eligible participants, including property
12 owners, property insurers, and contributors.

13 The legislature shall consider the report in determining
14 whether any adjustments to the wildfire relief fund are
15 necessary.

16 (g) Each member of the board shall retain all immunities
17 and rights provided to a member pursuant to section 26-35.5.

18 **§ -5 Administrator; wildfire relief fund corporation.**

19 (a) The board shall appoint an administrator and oversee the
20 administrator's management and administration of the
21 corporation.

1 (b) The administrator shall serve at the pleasure of the
2 board and shall be exempt from chapter 76.

3 (c) The administrator shall have such powers as are
4 necessary to carry out the functions of the corporation, subject
5 to the policy direction of the board.

6 (d) The administrator may employ, terminate, and supervise
7 employees, including assistants, experts, field personnel, and
8 clerks, as may be necessary in the administration of the
9 corporation.

10 (e) The board may overturn any decision of the
11 administrator through a majority vote.

12 (f) At the direction of the board, the administrator shall
13 prepare and present for approval a plan of operations related to
14 the operations, management, and administration of the wildfire
15 relief fund on an annual basis. At least annually and at the
16 direction of the board, the administrator shall present the plan
17 of operations to the appropriate policy committees of the
18 legislature. The plan shall include but not be limited to
19 reporting on the wildfire relief fund's assets and projections
20 for the duration of the fund.



1 (g) At the direction of the board, the administrator shall
2 at least annually prepare and publish on the corporation's
3 website a public-facing report that describes the operations and
4 activities of the corporation and wildfire relief fund during
5 the preceding year, including a description of the financial
6 condition of the wildfire relief fund.

7 § -6 **Wildfire relief fund corporation; audit.** (a) The
8 auditor shall conduct an annual audit of the corporation and
9 wildfire relief fund pursuant to chapter 23. As part of this
10 audit, the auditor may contract with a firm qualified to perform
11 an independent actuarial review.

12 (b) The auditor shall determine the scope of the review
13 required by this section, which shall include but is not limited
14 to:

- 15 (1) A review of the sources and uses of the moneys in the
16 wildfire relief fund;
- 17 (2) A reconciliation of changes in actuarial assumptions
18 and reserve values from the preceding year;
- 19 (3) An examination of the development of claim reserve
20 inadequacies or redundancies over time; and



1 (4) An assessment of the future financial viability of the
2 wildfire relief fund.

3 (c) The corporation shall cooperate with the actuarial
4 firm in all respects and shall permit the firm full access to
5 all information the firm deems necessary for a true and complete
6 review. Information provided to the actuarial firm conducting
7 the annual review is subject to the same limitations on public
8 inspections as required for the records of the corporation.

9 (d) The audit required by this section shall be conducted
10 using both generally accepted accounting principles and the
11 statutory accounting principles published by the National
12 Association of Insurance Commissioners.

13 (e) The cost of the audit required by this section shall
14 be paid by the corporation.

15 (f) The auditor shall issue an annual report to the
16 governor, president of the senate, and speaker of the house of
17 representatives on the results of the audit and review. The
18 audit and report of the review performed by the independent
19 actuarial firm shall be available for public inspection, in
20 accordance with the auditor's established rules and procedures
21 governing public disclosure of audit documents.



1 (g) The legislature shall consider whether, after review
2 of the annual report in subsection (f), any adjustments to the
3 wildfire relief fund should be implemented.

4 § -7 **Wildfire relief fund; participation.** (a) The
5 following entities may participate in the wildfire relief fund
6 as contributors:

- 7 (1) The State;
- 8 (2) Electric utilities;
- 9 (3) Public utilities that are not electric utilities that
10 contribute to the risk of occurrence or severity of a
11 catastrophic wildfire, including but not limited to
12 public utilities for the production, conveyance,
13 transmission, delivery, or furnishing of gas and for
14 the conveyance of telecommunications messages;
- 15 (4) Other governmental entities; and
- 16 (5) Private landowners who own, or whose affiliated
17 persons or entities own in the aggregate, at least one
18 thousand acres of land in Hawaii.

19 (b) To participate in the wildfire relief fund, an entity
20 shall:



1 (1) Notify the administrator that it intends to
2 participate in the wildfire relief fund
3 by in the year preceding the year in which
4 the entity seeks to participate in the wildfire relief
5 fund; and

6 (2) Have made required contributions to the wildfire
7 relief fund pursuant to section -8.

8 (c) A contributor that is also a property owner in Hawaii
9 may make a claim to the wildfire relief fund for compensation in
10 the same manner provided for in section -13 as other property
11 owners; provided that the contributor:

12 (1) Retains all of the rights, privileges, and obligations
13 of a contributor; and

14 (2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter
15 and regardless of the existence of a depletion event
16 under section -16(c), is bound by the limitation on
17 claims under section -18.

18 (d) Any person or entity that poses a risk of causing or
19 exacerbating the severity of a catastrophic wildfire that is not
20 eligible to participate as a contributor in the wildfire relief
21 fund may submit an application to the board for participation.



1 (e) The board shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 and
2 issue criteria for applications submitted under subsection (d).

3 (f) The board shall include in its annual report to the
4 legislature and governor under section -4 all applications
5 submitted under subsection (d) and shall recommend to the
6 legislature whether participation criteria for contributors
7 should be broadened.

8 § -8 **Wildfire relief fund; funding.** (a) Total
9 capitalization. The total capitalization amount of the wildfire
10 relief fund shall be \$. Neither the board nor the
11 administrator may modify the total capitalization amount, except
12 as otherwise expressly provided in this chapter.

13 (b) Actuarial study. The board shall commission an
14 actuarial study to be completed in 2024 to assess whether the
15 total capitalization amount should be increased or decreased
16 based on a holistic assessment of the risk of catastrophic
17 wildfires in Hawaii, and the potential exposure of the fund to
18 claims arising out of such wildfires. The board shall include
19 this assessment in the annual report that it submits to the
20 legislature and governor under section -4. The legislature
21 shall consider that assessment, as well as other information



1 submitted in the annual report, to determine whether adjustments
2 to the wildfire relief fund, including to its total
3 capitalization amount, should be implemented.

4 (c) Time to total capitalization. The administrator shall
5 recommend to the board, and the board shall, by majority vote,
6 approve initial contribution amounts under \$ for
7 potential contributors, other than the State and electric
8 utilities, based on the actuarial factors identified in
9 subsection (b) and with the goal of, to the extent reasonably
10 possible, having the wildfire relief fund reach the total
11 capitalization amount within five years of the effective date of
12 this Act, taking into consideration reasonably expected
13 investment returns and assuming no payments will be made by the
14 wildfire relief fund during that time period.

15 (d) Capitalization amounts. With the exception of the
16 contribution made by the State in paragraph (4), contribution
17 amounts shall be divided by the administrator into an initial
18 contribution amount to be made by , and annual
19 contribution amounts to be made over a five-year period, subject
20 to the administrator's ability to increase payments under the
21 insufficient funding provision in subsection (g).



1 The wildfire relief fund shall be capitalized by the
2 following contributions:

3 (1) From other governmental entities that are eligible to
4 elect to participate in the wildfire relief fund, an
5 amount determined by the administrator based on an
6 actuarial assessment of the risk of payments to these
7 entities by the fund resulting from catastrophic
8 wildfires created by such entities, as well as the
9 risk of potential payments made by the fund resulting
10 from catastrophic wildfires created by these entities;

11 (2) From public utilities other than electric utilities
12 and private landowners that are in all cases eligible
13 to participate in the wildfire relief fund, an amount
14 determined by the administrator based on an actuarial
15 assessment of the risk of potential payments by the
16 wildfire relief fund resulting from catastrophic
17 wildfires created by these entities;

18 (3) From electric utilities, \$; and

19 (4) From the State, \$.

20 (e) The board shall determine the contribution amounts of
21 eligible contributors by ; provided that this date is



1 thirty days before the date by which participants are required
2 to notify the administrator of their intention to participate in
3 the wildfire relief fund. If an eligible contributor declines
4 to notify the administrator that the eligible contributor wishes
5 to participate in the wildfire relief fund and become a
6 contributor, the board shall reduce the total capitalization
7 amount by subtracting the amount the board allocated to that
8 eligible contributor.

9 (f) If an electric utility, public utility other than an
10 electric utility, other governmental entity, or private
11 landowner elects to become a contributor after the initial
12 capitalization of the wildfire relief fund, the electric
13 utility, public utility other than an electric utility, other
14 governmental entity, or private landowner shall provide,
15 by _____ in the year before the year in which the electric
16 utility, public utility other than an electric utility, other
17 governmental entity, or private landowner seeks to become a
18 contributor, an initial contribution in an amount determined by
19 the board by a majority vote upon the administrator's
20 recommendation, based on an up-to-date consideration of the
21 factors identified in subsection (b), such that the previous and



1 present initial contributions by all contributors reflect their
2 relative contributions to the risk of future payments from the
3 wildfire relief fund.

4 If necessary to achieve such an allocation of initial
5 contributions, and if the election is made prior to the fifth
6 year of fund operation, the administrator shall reduce the
7 amount of annual contributions by one or more contributors who
8 previously made initial contributions until such an allocation
9 is reached. The administrator shall increase the total
10 capitalization amount of the fund by the amount of the initial
11 contribution of the new fund contributor. The administrator
12 may, in the administrator's discretion, permit a new contributor
13 under this subsection to make payments over a five-year period.

14 (g) Insufficient funding. If the administrator determines
15 that payments made by the wildfire relief fund, and expected
16 future contributions by contributors and investment returns,
17 will result in the fund's: failing to reach the total
18 capitalization amount, as adjusted, as applicable, under
19 subsection (a), by the fifth year; or falling below the total
20 capitalization amount after the fifth year--including, in either
21 case, as a result of the legislature increasing the total



1 capitalization amount--the administrator shall recommend that
2 the board establish a supplemental contribution to be
3 contributed to the wildfire relief fund. Responsibility among
4 contributors for the supplemental contribution shall be
5 allocated as follows:

6 (1) The administrator shall recommend to the board, and
7 the board shall determine by majority vote, the
8 respective portions of the supplemental contribution
9 amount to be paid by each electric utility, other
10 public utility, other governmental entity, and private
11 landowner contributor, based on an up-to-date
12 assessment of the factors identified in subsection
13 (b); and

14 (2) The remaining amount of the supplemental amount shall
15 be paid by the State, subject to legislative
16 appropriation.

17 (h) The administrator may allow contributors to pay
18 supplemental contributions via annual contributions, or in part
19 via an initial contribution followed by annual contributions,
20 unless the administrator determines such a contribution schedule
21 will create a material risk that the wildfire relief fund will



1 not reach or return to its total capitalization amount within a
2 reasonable period of time to perform the functions identified in
3 this chapter.

4 (i) If the board establishes a supplemental contribution
5 pursuant to subsection (g), before the wildfire relief fund
6 receives the supplemental contribution, the wildfire relief fund
7 may issue revenue bonds up to the amount of the supplemental
8 contribution, which shall be backed by future contributions to
9 the wildfire relief fund.

10 (j) The board may order supplemental contributions under
11 this chapter even if an investigation under the replenishment
12 process under section -9 is ongoing. In the event that
13 payments are later made under that replenishment process, the
14 board, provided that other conditions of the refunds section are
15 met pursuant to section -11, may refund supplemental
16 contributions in whole or in part.

17 (k) Utility contribution. An investor-owned utility's
18 contributions to the wildfire relief fund, including initial and
19 supplemental contributions, shall be recovered from its
20 customers in rates, unless the public utilities commission
21 directs otherwise pursuant to section -9.



1 (1) If the total amount of payments that the administrator
2 determines should be paid in connection with a catastrophic
3 wildfire pursuant to sections -13, -14, and -15 exceeds
4 the current balance of the wildfire relief fund, the State may
5 provide a loan to the wildfire relief fund. The loan shall be
6 repaid over time through annual contributions by contributors.

7 § -9 **Replenishment of the wildfire relief fund;**

8 **determination of prudence.** (a) If the administrator, or an
9 agency of the State with responsibility for determining the
10 causes of wildfires, informs the public utilities commission
11 that a catastrophic wildfire may have been ignited by the
12 facilities of an investor-owned utility that is a contributor,
13 the public utilities commission shall initiate a proceeding to
14 review the investor-owned utility's conduct leading to the
15 catastrophic wildfire and make findings. The public utilities
16 commission may, even without formal notice from the
17 administrator or the agency, initiate this proceeding of its own
18 accord.

19 (b) The public utilities commission shall evaluate the
20 prudence of the conduct of the investor-owned utility in
21 connection with a catastrophic wildfire as follows:



- 1 (1) If the investor-utility has a wildfire risk mitigation
2 plan that was approved by the public utilities
3 commission, the investor-utility's conduct will be
4 deemed to have been prudent, unless a party to the
5 proceeding creates a serious doubt as to the prudence
6 of the investor-owned utility's conduct; or
- 7 (2) If the investor-utility does not have a wildfire risk
8 mitigation plan that was approved by the public
9 utilities commission, or if the public utilities
10 commission determines that the presumption is
11 overcome, the public utilities commission shall
12 determine whether the investor-owned utility acted
13 prudently, considering only acts that may have caused
14 the ignition and evaluating the utility's actions in
15 the context of the utility's overall systems,
16 processes and programs, such that an error by a
17 utility employee would not be a basis for a finding of
18 imprudence, unless that error was the result of an
19 imprudent system, process, or program.
- 20 (c) In evaluating prudence under this section, the public
21 utilities commission shall determine whether the actions of the



1 investor-owned utility were consistent with actions that a
2 reasonable utility would have undertaken in good faith under
3 similar circumstances, at the relevant point in time, and based
4 on the information available to the investor-owned utility at
5 the relevant point in time.

6 Reasonable conduct shall not be limited to the optimum
7 practice, method, or act to the exclusion of others, but rather
8 shall encompass a spectrum of possible practices, methods, or
9 acts consistent with utility system needs, the interest of
10 ratepayers, and the requirements of governmental agencies of
11 competent jurisdiction.

12 (d) If the public utilities commission determines that
13 imprudent conduct by the investor-owned utility caused the
14 catastrophic wildfire, the public utilities commission shall
15 determine whether to order the utility to reimburse the wildfire
16 relief fund in whole or in part for payments from the fund made
17 in connection with the catastrophic wildfire. In determining
18 the amount of reimbursement, if any, the public utilities
19 commission shall consider the extent and severity of the
20 utility's imprudence and factors within and beyond the utility's
21 control that may have led to or exacerbated the costs from the



1 catastrophic wildfire, including but not limited to humidity,
2 temperature, winds, fuel, merged wildfires with independent
3 ignitions, third-party actions that affected the spread of the
4 wildfire, and fire suppression activities.

5 (e) The public utilities commission shall not order the
6 investor-owned utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in
7 an amount that exceeds the lesser of:

8 (1) The costs that the public utilities commission
9 determines were due to the investor-owned utility's
10 imprudence; or

11 (2) Twenty per cent of the investor-owned utility's
12 transmission and distribution equity rate base minus
13 the amounts the utility has reimbursed, or is required
14 to reimburse, the wildfire relief fund during the
15 period of three consecutive calendar years ending on
16 December 31 of the year in which the calculation is
17 being performed.

18 (f) If the public utilities commission orders the
19 investor-owned utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund,
20 the utility shall not recover the amount of the reimbursement in
21 rates charged to ratepayers.



1 (g) If the administrator, or an agency of the State with
2 responsibility for determining the causes of wildfires or other
3 catastrophic wildfires concludes that the conduct of a
4 cooperative utility, other governmental entity, or private
5 landowner that is a contributor may have caused the occurrence
6 or contributed to the severity of a catastrophic wildfire, the
7 administrator shall assess the prudence of the contributor's
8 conduct, applying the same standard of prudence applied to
9 investor-owned utilities pursuant to subsection (c).

10 (h) If the administrator determines that the contributor
11 acted imprudently and that such imprudence caused or contributed
12 to the severity of the catastrophic wildfire, the administrator
13 shall recommend that the board require such contributor to
14 reimburse the wildfire relief fund in whole or in part for
15 payments that the fund made in connection with the catastrophic
16 wildfire, considering the factors set forth in subsection (d),
17 subject to a cap of ten per cent of the contributor's assets
18 within Hawaii, measured over a rolling three-year period.

19 § -10 **Failure to make contributions to wildfire relief**
20 **fund.** (a) Contributors shall notify the administrator if they
21 will make, or fail to make, a required contribution, whether



1 initial, annual, or supplemental, to the wildfire relief fund at
2 least days before the contribution is due.

3 (b) If a contributor fails to make a required contribution
4 to the wildfire relief fund, that contributor will no longer be
5 a contributor as of the date that the contribution was due.
6 That entity may, however, rejoin the fund under the process for
7 joining the fund after initial capitalization set forth in
8 section -8.

9 (c) The administrator shall not refund to an entity that
10 fails to make a contribution any previous payments made to the
11 wildfire relief fund. However, the administrator shall credit
12 all such previous contributions when determining the amount of
13 payment to be made if a participant rejoins the fund under
14 subsection (b).

15 § -11 **Refunds.** (a) In the event that the total amount
16 in the wildfire relief fund exceeds one hundred twenty per cent
17 of the total capitalization amount, the administrator may
18 recommend that the board authorize refunds to be made to the
19 contributors; provided that the refunds do not deplete the
20 wildfire relief fund below one hundred twenty per cent of the
21 total capitalization amount.



1 (b) Refunds shall be made in proportion to the total
2 amount contributed by the contributors to the wildfire relief
3 fund as of the date of the refund, excluding any payments made
4 under the replenishment provisions under section -9.

5 (c) The administrator has no obligation to recommend, and
6 the board has no obligation to authorize, a refund. The board
7 shall make a refund only if it takes into consideration all
8 relevant factors and circumstances and determines that making a
9 refund will be unlikely to result in the wildfire relief fund's
10 falling below one hundred twenty per cent of total
11 capitalization within three years after the refund.

12 (d) Any contributor may request that the board make a
13 refund whenever the conditions under this section are met.

14 (e) If the board elects to issue a refund or elects not to
15 do so after receiving a request under subsection (d), the
16 administrator shall issue an order explaining the board's
17 decision.

18 § -12 **Processing of claims.** (a) With the approval of
19 the board, the administrator shall establish and approve
20 procedures for the review, approval, and timely payment of
21 claims for reimbursement from the wildfire relief fund. The



1 procedures may be revised from time to time by the administrator
2 with the approval of the board.

3 (b) In the event of a catastrophic wildfire within the
4 State, the administrator shall process claims made for
5 compensation against the wildfire relief fund related to the
6 catastrophic wildfire, consistent with the requirements of this
7 chapter.

8 § -13 **Claims by property owners.** (a) To be eligible
9 for compensation from the wildfire relief fund for damage to
10 property from a catastrophic wildfire, a property owner shall
11 not have opted out from participation in the wildfire relief
12 fund before the occurrence of the catastrophic wildfire.

13 (b) County tax assessors shall include, with each real
14 property tax assessment sent to a property owner in the State, a
15 prominent notice regarding participation in the wildfire relief
16 fund. The notice shall be in a form prescribed by the
17 administrator and shall clearly explain the property owner's
18 right to opt out of participation in the wildfire relief fund by
19 submitting a request to opt out to the administrator within a
20 specific time. A property owner who does not submit a timely
21 request to opt out shall be deemed to participate in the



1 wildfire relief fund as of the deadline for submitting a request
2 to opt out.

3 (c) Any costs of administering the process described in
4 subsection (b) shall be reimbursed by the wildfire relief fund.

5 (d) In order to opt out of participation in the wildfire
6 relief fund with regard to property either in areas within the
7 State that have been assigned extreme, high, and moderate
8 wildfire risk classes by _____, a property owner shall
9 submit documentation of insurance coverage for such property
10 along with the property owner's request to opt out of the
11 wildfire relief fund, and the administrator shall approve such
12 documentation as adequate evidence of insurance for the
13 applicable property.

14 (e) Following a catastrophic wildfire, to make a claim for
15 compensation from the wildfire relief fund for damage to
16 property from the wildfire, a property owner shall submit to the
17 administrator documentation establishing:

18 (1) That the catastrophic wildfire damaged the owner's
19 property;

20 (2) The extent of the losses to the owner's property
21 caused by that catastrophic wildfire; and



1 (3) Any insurance policy providing coverage for those
2 losses.

3 (f) Within ninety days after a property owner submits a
4 claim for compensation from the wildfire relief fund, including
5 the documentation required in this section, the administrator
6 shall determine whether the documentation is adequate and, if
7 so, the appropriate amount of the payment to the property owner
8 from the wildfire relief fund. If the administrator determines
9 that the property owner has not submitted sufficient
10 documentation for the administrator to evaluate the claim, the
11 administrator may request additional documentation from the
12 property owner and may set a date by which the additional
13 information shall be provided by the property owner.

14 (g) If no insurance policy provides coverage for the
15 losses for which a property owner seeks compensation from the
16 wildfire relief fund, the property owner shall be eligible to
17 receive as compensation from the wildfire relief fund a maximum
18 of \$.

19 (h) If an insurance policy provides coverage for the
20 losses for which a property owner seeks compensation from the
21 wildfire relief fund, the property owner shall be eligible to



1 receive as compensation from the wildfire relief fund an amount
2 up to the lesser of:

3 (1) per cent of the amount by which the property
4 owner's losses exceed the amount of insurance coverage
5 for such losses; or

6 (2) per cent of the property owner's insurance
7 coverage applicable to such losses;

8 provided that the property owner submits adequate documentation
9 of those losses, as required by this section.

10 § -14 **Claims by property insurers.** (a) To be eligible
11 for compensation from the wildfire relief fund, a property
12 insurer shall have elected to participate in the fund prior to
13 the annual policy period in which the catastrophic wildfire
14 occurred. The administrator shall establish a process for
15 property insurers to annually submit an election to participate
16 in the fund to the administrator within a specified time.

17 (b) All property insurers who elect to participate in the
18 wildfire relief fund shall be eligible to receive as
19 compensation from the wildfire relief fund per cent of
20 their total payments for property damage claims in Hawaii as a
21 result of a catastrophic wildfire.



1 (c) Following a catastrophic wildfire, to make a claim for
2 compensation from the wildfire relief fund based on claims
3 resulting from the catastrophic wildfire, an eligible property
4 insurer shall submit to the administrator documentation
5 establishing the number, nature, and total value of insurance
6 claims that the property insurer paid pursuant to its policies
7 for damage resulting from the catastrophic wildfire as well as
8 documentation sufficient to assess the reasonableness of the
9 property insurer's payment of such claims.

10 (d) After receipt of a property insurer's claim for
11 compensation from the wildfire relief fund, including the
12 documentation required in this section, the administrator shall:

13 (1) Review via an expedited procedure the property
14 insurer's claim for compensation from the wildfire
15 relief fund; and

16 (2) Determine:

17 (A) Whether the documentation provided is adequate;
18 and

19 (B) The appropriate amount of the payment to the
20 property insurer from the fund.



1 § -15 **Claims by the State and other governmental**
2 **entities.** (a) The State may submit claims for compensation
3 from the wildfire relief fund for damages it incurred resulting
4 from a catastrophic wildfire, including damage to infrastructure
5 or other property, costs of fire suppression, and natural
6 resource damages, to the extent recovery of such losses is
7 authorized by law.

8 (b) Other governmental entities may submit claims for
9 compensation from the wildfire relief fund for damages they
10 incurred resulting from a catastrophic wildfire, including
11 damage to infrastructure or other property and other losses, to
12 the extent recovery of such losses is authorized by law;
13 provided that to be eligible for compensation from the wildfire
14 relief fund related to a catastrophic wildfire, another
15 governmental entity shall elect to be a contributor and shall
16 have satisfied contribution obligations pursuant to
17 section -8 before the occurrence of the catastrophic
18 wildfire.

19 (c) To make a claim under this section, the State or other
20 governmental entity shall submit to the administrator
21 documentation establishing:

- 1 (1) That the catastrophic wildfire caused the damages;
- 2 (2) The extent of the damages caused by the catastrophic
- 3 wildfire; and
- 4 (3) Any other documentation necessary to establish the
- 5 State's or other governmental entity's right to
- 6 recover such losses pursuant to law.

7 (d) After receipt of a claim for compensation from the
8 wildfire relief fund pursuant to this section, the administrator
9 shall determine whether the State or other governmental entity
10 is authorized to recover damages under applicable law and, if
11 so, the appropriate amount of the payment.

12 § -16 **Fund depletion.** (a) Within thirty days of a
13 catastrophic wildfire, the administrator shall assess whether
14 the total payments that the wildfire relief fund is projected to
15 make to eligible property owners, property insurers, and the
16 State and other governmental entities under
17 sections -13, -14, and -15, respectively, are expected
18 to exceed seventy-five per cent of the total available money
19 remaining in the wildfire relief fund. The board shall adopt
20 rules pursuant to chapter 91 regarding the performance of this
21 assessment.



1 (b) If the administrator assesses pursuant to subsection
2 (a) that the total payments that the wildfire relief fund is
3 projected to make to eligible property owners, property
4 insurers, and the State and other governmental entities under
5 sections -13, -14, and -15, respectively, are expected
6 to exceed seventy-five per cent of the total available money
7 remaining in the wildfire relief fund, the administrator shall
8 seek to increase the total amount of money in the fund using all
9 available methods under this chapter.

10 (c) Depletion event. If the administrator is unable,
11 despite taking the steps under subsection (b), to secure
12 sufficient additional funding for the wildlife relief fund,
13 including credible pledges for future funding, to reverse the
14 administrator's assessment under subsection (a) within forty-
15 five days, the administrator shall declare the existence of a
16 depletion event.

17 (d) Depletion percentage. If the administrator declares
18 the existence of a depletion event, the administrator shall
19 determine what percentage of total eligible payments the
20 wildlife relief fund can make without the likelihood that the
21 payments will exceed seventy-five per cent of the total



1 available money in the wildlife relief fund. This percentage
2 shall be deemed the depletion percentage.

3 (e) Depletion payment. The administrator shall thereafter
4 offer all property owners, property insurers, the State, and
5 other governmental entities that submit claims for compensation
6 from the wildfire relief fund and would otherwise, under
7 sections -13, -14, and -15, respectively, be entitled
8 to a particular payment amount, that amount multiplied by the
9 depletion percentage. This amount shall be deemed the depletion
10 payment.

11 (f) All claimants that are offered the depletion payment
12 may choose to accept or decline the payment. Any property owner
13 or property insurer, other than a contributor, that declines to
14 accept the depletion payment shall:

15 (1) Be ineligible for any payments by the wildfire relief
16 fund with respect to the catastrophic wildfire for
17 which the claim was made; and

18 (2) Not be bound by the limitation on claims under
19 section -18 with respect to only that catastrophic
20 wildfire.



1 (g) After the payments to all claimants who accepted the
2 depletion payment have been made, the administrator may
3 recommend to the board, and the board may decide, in its
4 discretion, to make a further payment to all claimants who
5 accepted the depletion payment. The board shall adopt rules
6 pursuant to chapter 91 for the making of this decision.

7 (h) Multiple catastrophic events. The board shall adopt
8 rules pursuant to chapter 91 regarding how to pay claims in the
9 event that one or more catastrophic wildfires occur while the
10 corporation is in the process of assessing, receiving,
11 determining, or paying claims from an earlier catastrophic
12 wildfire.

13 § -17 **Hearings and appeals of determinations.** (a)
14 Within thirty days after the administrator's determination of
15 the amount of payment due to any claimant from the wildfire
16 relief fund pursuant to sections -13, -14, and -15,
17 respectively, or the board's determination of a contributor's
18 allocation for any contribution, the affected person or entity
19 may request a review and hearing on that determination before
20 the department of commerce and consumer affairs.



1 (b) Upon receipt of a request for review of the
2 administrator or board's determination, the department of
3 commerce and consumer affairs shall refer the request for
4 hearing to the office of administrative hearings for
5 determination as expeditiously as possible. A hearing shall be
6 scheduled for a date no more than days after receipt by the
7 department of commerce and consumer affairs of the request for a
8 hearing.

9 (c) Following the conclusion of any hearing or prior to
10 the conclusion of the hearing, with the concurrence of the
11 parties, the office of administrative hearings shall promptly,
12 and no later than days after the hearing, decide the matter
13 and make an order in accordance with the administrative judge's
14 decision.

15 (d) Within days after the date on which a copy of the
16 office of administrative hearings' order is mailed to the
17 parties, a party may seek judicial review of the order by filing
18 a petition for review in the applicable circuit court, with a
19 right of appeal as allowed by law. If no such petition is
20 timely filed, the order of the office of administrative hearings
21 shall be final.



1 § -18 **Limitations on claims.** (a) No suit, claim, or
2 other civil legal action may be instituted or maintained against
3 contributors or their affiliates, employees, agents, or
4 insurers:

5 (1) For recovery of losses or damages of a type for which
6 compensation may be sought from the wildfire relief
7 fund; and

8 (2) By persons or entities:

9 (A) Who are contributors, property owners who do not
10 opt out of the wildfire relief fund, or property
11 insurers who elect to participate in the wildfire
12 relief fund; or

13 (B) Who seek indemnity or contribution for amounts
14 paid, or that may be paid, to contributors,
15 property owners who do not opt out of the
16 wildfire relief fund, or property insurers who
17 elect to participate in the wildfire relief fund.

18 (b) Persons or entities who are eligible to seek
19 compensation from the wildfire relief fund for property damage
20 arising from a catastrophic wildfire may not seek to recover for
21 such damage from electric utilities, public utilities other than



1 electric utilities, the State, or private landowners who are
2 contributors, notwithstanding that the claimed property damage
3 may exceed the amount of payment by the wildfire relief fund for
4 such damage.

5 (c) The wildfire relief fund shall be subrogated to the
6 rights of the contributors, property owners who do not opt out
7 of the wildfire relief fund, and property insurers who elect to
8 participate in the wildfire relief fund, to the extent of any
9 payment made by the wildfire relief fund to such person or
10 entity, such that the wildfire relief fund may pursue claims
11 against a person or entity that is not a contributor for damages
12 resulting from the catastrophic wildfire."

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for
16 deposit into the wildfire relief fund.

17 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
18 commerce and consumer affairs for the purposes of this Act.

19 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
21 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for



1 the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
2 administrator position, who shall be exempt from chapter 76,
3 Hawaii Revised Statutes, to support the Hawaii wildfire relief
4 fund corporation; provided that in all subsequent fiscal years,
5 all funding for the administrator position shall be paid from
6 the wildfire relief fund.

7 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
8 commerce and consumer affairs for the purposes of this Act.

9 SECTION 5. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of
10 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,
11 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the
12 appropriations contained in H.B. No. , will cause the state
13 general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be
14 exceeded by \$ or per cent. In addition, the
15 appropriation contained in this Act will cause the general fund
16 expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be further
17 exceeded by \$ or per cent. The combined total
18 amount of general fund appropriations contained in only these
19 two Acts will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling
20 for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by



H.B. NO. 2700

Report Title:

Hawaii Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation; Public Utilities Commission; Catastrophic Wildfire; Appropriation; Expenditure Ceiling

Description:

Establishes the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State. Appropriates funds.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Lyle J. Matsunaga

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lyle J. Matsunaga and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Maui Electric and Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 19 years. Having worked for the company as a Director, Finance and Manager, Accounting, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The companies have provided career opportunities for my family and other families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The companies continue to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kristie Calicdan

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kristie Calicdan and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

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HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Christal Subica

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Christal Subica, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a family member of an employee of Hawaiian Electric. I am proud that Hawaiian Electric is part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

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HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Charise Suzuki

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Charise Suzuki and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

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WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Fabio van den Bylaardt

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Fabio van den Bylaardt and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

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WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Phillip Gerwien

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Phillip Gerwien and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

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HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Gary Hanaoka

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Gary Hanaoka and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 11 years. Having worked for the company as an ERP Systems Administrator, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:51:04 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary Pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 2700. Mahalo

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Mark Shimabukuro

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Mark Shimabukuro and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Vanessa Carlson

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Vanessa Carlson and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a family member of an employee of Hawaiian Electric. I am proud that Hawaiian Electric is part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

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Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:03:44 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shellbi Mahuna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony before the HOUSE COMMITTEES ON

WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Shellbi Mahuna

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Shellbi Mahuna and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a family member of an employee of Hawaiian Electric. I am proud that Hawaiian Electric is part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Daryl Kogasaka

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Daryl Kogasaka and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:15:36 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raimar Bylaardt II	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony before the HOUSE COMMITTEES ON

WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Raimar Bylaardt II

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Raimar Bylaardt and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Chad Asato

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Chad Asato and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Timothy Lee

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Timothy Lee and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for eight years. I am also a retired employee of Verizon Hawaii with 24 years of service. Having worked for Hawaiian Electric as a regulatory analyst, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii. Having also retired from Verizon Hawaii, I can share that the experience with the Carlyle Group to acquire Verizon Hawaii was not a positive one.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for local families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company also provides our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

Even if I were not a retiree of Hawaiian Electric, I would still support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating

would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

The current HB 2700 defines a catastrophic wildfire as one which damages or destroys more than 500 residential or commercial structures. Could this definition be broadened or changed to allow more flexibility in determining whether a catastrophic wildfire has occurred or not? For example, would a condominium with 300 units count as one structure under the current definition?

Please pass HB 2700 with any appropriate changes as the committee might deem prudent. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Thurston Wong

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Thurston Wong and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:45:52 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leslie Malasa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON

WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Leslie Malasa

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Leslie Malasa and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations, including some of my own family members. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I'm in support of HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Mahalo for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Leasha Zimmerman]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Leasha Zimmerman] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. I was personally affected by the wildfire in Lahaina as I lost 3 vehicles, my home and all of my personal belonging that I have worked hard for in the last 10 years of living at my home. I was present and I saw the fire start as it came through Lahaina so fast, this will be the 3rd wildfire I have experienced while living on Lahainaluna Road. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Marcia Cristiane Almeida van den Bylaardt

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Marcia Cristiane Almeida van den Bylaardt and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Everett A. Lacro

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Everett Lacro and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 26 years. I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Stacey Ueda

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Stacey Ueda and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Laura Rogers

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Laura Rogers and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Sharri Thornton

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Sharri Thornton and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Rochelle Iwane

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Rochelle Iwane and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 11:18:05 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mitchell La Puente	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Mitchell La Puente and I am testifying in support of HB2700. I support this bill because all of us are in it this together and this is the best way to reduce risk to all citizens of Hawaii. Without this bill we keep ourselves open to outside lawyers coming in and taking as much money as they can from all of us. This bill is a good solution to protect all citizens from hawaii from the unpredictablity of wildfires and will protect all working class citizens from outside people trying to make a quick dollar.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jane Muranaka

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jane Muranaka and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Christine Mounthongdy

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Christine Mounthongdy and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Bernadette Lavallee

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Bernadette Lavallee and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Michelle Orian-Lau

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Michelle Orian-Lau and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kanani Imai

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kanani Imai and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by KERRY KANAKAOLE

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kerry Kanakaole and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company as a(n) Lineman, Supervisor and Superintendent, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Lori Yafuso

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lori Yafuso and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 22 years. Having worked for the company as a(n) IT Program Manager, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Darren Ishimura

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Darren Ishimura and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I support HB 2700 because it proposes a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While I hope what happened in West Maui never happens again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does.

This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai'i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. Reining in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires can, for example, help maintain an electric utility's positive credit rating and thus allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety, reliability, and resilience of its electrical grid. This ultimately will help the residents of Hawai'i.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that Hawaiian Electric is deeply rooted in Hawai'i's communities and the State needs Hawaiian Electric to continue its vital role in helping the State prosper. As one of Hawai'i's largest employers, Hawaiian Electric provides career opportunities for families who grew up here and continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by William Chang

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is William Chang and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Ellen Nashiwa

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Ellen Nashiwa and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide us and our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. I was fortunate enough to join Hawaiian Electric when I moved home from California to Maui 18 years ago.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In speaking with family and friends affected by the wildfire, they just want a way to rebuild and move forward while working to ensure appropriate steps are taken to mitigate future risks. Even as risk mitigation plans are implemented, there are no guarantees. This bill would also protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. This also helps those entities continue to provide jobs for thousands of Hawaii residents so they can stay in Hawaii, where most were born and raised. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Wendy Takara

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Wendy Takara and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Karin Kimura

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Karin Kimura, a long-time resident on O‘ahu, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland, helping to reduce “brain drain” in Hawai‘i.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai‘i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill’s purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility’s positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for this bill.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Christine Jade Fe Benito

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Christine Jade Fe Benito and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Yvonne Phillipson

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Yvonne Phillipson and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Randolph China]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Randolph China] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by [Rose China]

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is [Rose China] and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 12:18:52 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Giovanni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I fully support HB2700. It's critically important that the residents of Hawai'i be able to rely on a financially stable electric utility. HECO has proven itself for more than 130 years to operate in the interests of the greater Hawaiian Ohana.

Sincerely,

Dan Giovanni

Retired HECO Employee

Chair, State Land Use Commission

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Faith Duenas

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Faith Duenas and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Robert Isler

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Robert Isler and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company as an engineer and executive, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Donica Kaneshiro

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Donica Kaneshiro and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Michelle Zambetti

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Michelle Zambetti and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Tia Waikīkī

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Tia Waikīkī and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Teri Theuriet

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Teri Theuriet and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I was born and raised in Kāneʻohe and believe passage of HB 2700 is in the best interest of everyone in Hawaiʻi should we ever, God forbid, experience another catastrophic wildfire. Having followed the news in the aftermath of Lahaina as well as the Camp Fire in California, it's clear that litigation has a negative impact on the area economy. Not just those who were directly impacted by wildfires, but the many in neighboring communities whose livelihoods rely on an economically-thriving region.

Testimony from those displaced by the Camp Fire has shown that their healing process was painfully delayed – and in some cases, healing could never even take place – because of complicated and emotionally-charged litigation. Through passage of HB2700, Hawaiʻi has a chance to provide our local families and business owners with assurance of faster relief should the unthinkable happen, so they can resume their lives and contributions to our economy.

Let's help give our residents this reassurance and help prevent more kamaaina from leaving the state. I urge you to pass HB 2700. Mahalo for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Tammy Takitani

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Tammy Takitani and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by: Aloha Fontes

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Aloha Fontes and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 12:49:19 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Howard Char	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Howard Char am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided many career opportunities for our families in the islands. The company has provided opportunities for all our generations to live and work here rather than having to move elsewhere.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in case of another major wildfire that may be caused by any unknown factor. This bill is to ensure that resources will be available if it does. Please pass HB 2700.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Joanna Markle

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Joanna Markle and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by John DiGiovanni

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is John DiGiovanni and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Peter Okunami

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Peter Okunami and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 32 years. I graduated from the UH Manoa, College of Engineering and having worked for the company as an Engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jon Concepcion

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jon Concepcion, and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. I have four children and six grandchildren, two of my four children and all six of my grandchildren has moved from Hawaii to live on the mainland. I hope that by supporting this bill Hawaiian Electric will continue to keep the lights on and continue to provide the next generation opportunities to work and to keep families together,

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by V. Kuwanoe

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is V. Kuwanoe and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Jason Sampang

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jason Sampang and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Ken Ho

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric is generationally known and a foundational Hawaii company. It employs locals and has provided thousands of career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands. The company continues to provide many opportunities for local families to live and work and remain in Hawaii.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill creates a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by S. Heijin Lee

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Heijin Lee and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Having seen the devastation that the Lahaina wildfires has left behind and what the affected families are still going through I support this bill.

HB 2700 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. This bill would ensure that if another catastrophic event were to occur, a relief fund for potential victims would provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Heijin Lee', written in a cursive style.

S. Heijin Lee

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 2:09:13 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Poepoe, Vice-Chair Sayama, and Honorable House Committee Members:

I respectfully present this testimony to support HB2700 , which seeks to establish a Hawaii Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation under the auspices of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Following the massive Leeward Coast O`ahu wildfires of August 4, 2018 and the burning of Lahaina on August 8, 2023, there is a HUGE need to provide compensation caused by wildfire property damage. However, we believe that the fund should be called “the Hawai`i Wildfire Prevention /Relief Fund and Corporation” AND should include funding for operation and maintenance of the ONLY fire helicopter that could have prevented the Lahaina burning (it flies in 70-80 mph winds, flies at NIGHT, and carries 1,000 gallons) – the Sikorsky FireHawk®.

My family and I have lived and worked on the Wai`anae Coast since 1989 and my relatives – many cousins – all grew up along this Coast. Since returning to farm in Wai`anae in 2012, we have personally fought – alongside the Honolulu Fire Department – wildfires in Wai`anae Valley in June 2012, in November 2016, on August 4, 2018 and again in July 2020. The 2018 fire completely surrounded our Wai`anae farm site and almost completely engulfed our farm structures – but for our family fighting the flames with hoses across the hillside and our son simultaneously enlarging our existing firebreaks as the flames surrounded our Wai`anae Ag. Park lot. I will try to attach photos below. AFTER than event, we were assured by then-Gov. Ige, that we farmers would obtain some type of lease-rent forgiveness for our losses (our crops were smothered by smoke and ash) – this NEVER happened. After 2018, we began intensely researching fire helicopters that could quickly respond to and extinguish wildfire blazes and the ONLY Fire Copter we located (also used by Cal-Fire) was the Sikorsky Firehawk®. Again, this can fly in high winds, fly at night, carry 1,000 gallons of water (it refills its tank with a nozzle – NO buckets are used) and can also carry 1-4 EMT personnel to quickly respond to medical emergencies.

For all of the above reasons, we NEED HB2700 and we urge your committees to please SUPPORT this bill with funding and allow it to move forward during this 2024 Legislative session -- not only for wildfire relief, but also PREVENTION with possible funding for a proper, more-effective, fire-fighting Firehawk® helicopter that can serve the entire State of Hawai`I and perhaps prevent another Lahaina disaster that NEVER needed to occur in the first place. Just as

the burning of Lahaina in the early 20th century caused Hawai`i to invest in upgrading fire-fighting equipment, we find that last August's disaster requires the same upgrades.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting HB 2700.

Nancy A. Jones

PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: nancyhydroalt@gmail.com



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kenji C. Kusaka

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kenji Kusaka and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Having worked for the company as a Project Manager for Maui Electric and as a Manager, Contract Administration for renewable projects, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

Kenji

HB-2700

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 2:18:42 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zeb Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Poepoe, Vice-Chair Sayama, and Honorable House Committee Members:

I respectfully present this testimony to support HB2700, which would establish a Hawaii Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation via the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Following the August 4, 2018 massive Leeward Coast O`ahu wildfires and the burning of Lahaina on August 8, 2023, there is a HUGE need to provide compensation caused by wildfire property damage. However, we believe that the fund should be called “the Hawai`i Wildfire Prevention /Relief Fund and Corporation” AND should include funding for operation and maintenance of the ONLY fire helicopter that could have prevented the Lahaina burning (it flies in 70-80 mph winds, flies at NIGHT, and carries 1,000 gallons) – the Sikorsky FireHawk®.

My family and I have lived and worked on the Wai`anae Coast since 1989 and my wife’s many cousins – all grew up along this Coast. Since returning to farm in Wai`anae in 2012, we have personally fought – along with the Honolulu Fire Department – wildfires in Wai`anae Valley in June 2012, in November 2016, on August 4, 2018 and again in July 2020. The 2018 fire completely surrounded our Wai`anae farm site and almost completely engulfed our farm structures. With flames surrounding our Wai`anae Ag. Park lot, our family was forced to fight the flames with hoses across the hillside while our son simultaneously enlarged our existing dirt firebreaks using our on-site borrowed excavator. I will try to attach photos below. Following that traumatic 2018 event, we were assured by then-Gov. Ige, that we farmers would obtain some type of lease-rent forgiveness for our losses (our crops were smothered by smoke and ash) – this NEVER happened. After 2018, we began intensely researching fire helicopters that could quickly respond to and extinguish wildfire blazes and the ONLY Fire Copter we located (also used by Cal-Fire) was the Sikorsky Firehawk®. Again, this can fly in high winds, fly at night, carry 1,000 gallons of water (it refills its tank with a nozzle – NO buckets are used) and can also carry 1-4 EMT personnel to quickly respond to medical emergencies.

For all of the above reasons, we NEED HB2700 and we urge your committees to please SUPPORT this bill with funding and allow it to move forward during this 2024 Legislative session -- not only for wildfire relief, but also PREVENTION with possible funding for a proper, more-effective, fire-fighting Firehawk® helicopter that can serve the entire State of Hawai`I and perhaps prevent another Lahaina disaster that NEVER needed to occur in the first place. Just as the burning of Lahaina in the early 20th century caused Hawai`i to invest in upgrading fire-fighting equipment, we find that last August’s disaster requires the same upgrades.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting HB 2700.

ZEBUEL C. "ZEB" JONES

PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792

Email: zebbe3442@gmail.com

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Kelsey Ito

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kelsey Ito and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Karen Lung

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Karen Lung and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Submitted by Shane Murayama

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Shane Murayama and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 25 years. Having worked for the company as a Operations Superintendent, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support HB 2700 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass HB 2700. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

HB 2700

Relating to Wildfires

February 2, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room # 329

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Nakashima, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Sayama, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lynne Unemori and I am testifying in support of HB 2700, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric, where I worked for more than 31 years.

HB 2700 provides an important way to support Hawai'i families in the event of another catastrophic wildfire. While all efforts are being made to prevent what happened in West Maui from ever occurring again, this bill helps ensure resources would be available if it does. HB 2700 would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai'i families with an efficient process for receiving resources to help recover from property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, regardless of the cause. This bill would also protect the credit of the state, counties, landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. In doing so, it would reduce the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. Reducing this uncertainty has a direct public benefit. For example, reducing financial uncertainty can help improve a utility's credit rating which would allow it to access cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid. Electric utility customers directly benefit from the savings of lower financing costs as well as from the actual grid improvements.

In fact, the interests of our community and the utility are very much intertwined in many ways. I am proud to have been a part of one of the few remaining local companies in Hawai'i, led by local leadership and management. As I experienced for more than three decades at the company, Hawaiian Electric continues to be deeply committed to serving our local families and businesses, providing local jobs and giving back to our communities through charitable giving and community service.

Please support HB 2700 as a way to provide expeditious resources to help our community if a catastrophic wildfire should ever occur again. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.