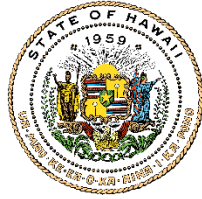


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU,

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

LAURA H.E. KAAKUA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

**Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committees on
WATER & LAND
and
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Thursday, March 16, 2023
9:05 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 409, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO FIRE PREVENTION**

Senate Bill 409, Senate Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels on the landscape, particularly on lands adjacent to communities. **The Department strongly supports this measure.**

With changes in land use and climate in Hawai'i, wildfire is a significant and growing hazard in many places across the state. Research in wildfire science shows that vegetation is a key component for recurring wildfire. Vegetation management is essential for reducing wildfire hazard, creating safer conditions for firefighters, and serving as a key climate adaptation strategy as climate change increases risk for fire. Funds are needed by the Department to reduce hazardous fuels on the landscape that threaten not only the watersheds the Department manages but also the adjacent communities and critical public infrastructure such as powerlines and communication facilities. The requested funds will be used to create firebreaks between communities and watersheds, reduce flammable grasses on the landscape through projects like managed grazing and forest restoration, and provide water infrastructure for tree planting, grazing, and fire suppression.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testify in strong support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
www.labor.hawaii.gov

March 13, 2023

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
The State House
State Capitol, Room 426
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair
Committee on Energy
and Environmental Protection
The State House
State Capitol, Room 436
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Lowen:

Subject: Senate Bill (SB) 409, Senate Draft (SD) 1 Relating to Fire Prevention

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC supports SB 409, SD 1, which appropriates approximately \$1,500,000 for fiscal year (FY) 2024 and the same sum for FY 2025 for the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) community fuels reduction project to support wildfire prevention and hazardous fuel reduction measures.

The DOFAW is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State of Hawaii's forested watersheds (or 25% of the land area in Hawaii) and supports federal and county responders on remaining areas in the State. Due to climate change and associated droughts, the annual area burned in Hawaii has grown in past decades. In fact, the percentage of land area burned annually in Hawaii exceeds the national average and, in some years, it surpasses the 12 most fire-prone western states.

The DOFAW's fire and emergency response mandates require specialized equipment. The DOFAW collaborates with the county fire departments to extinguish fires on forested land managed by the DOFAW and residential areas (the wildland-urban interface) managed by the counties. The DOFAW provides specialty expertise, equipment, and other resources in these environments which the county fire departments do not possess due to training, funding, or mission requirement. The

The Honorable Donovan Linda Ichiyama, Chair
The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair
Page 2
March 13, 2023

Department also assists counties during natural disasters, such as hurricanes and lava flows.

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

The SFC urges your committee's support on the passage of SB 409, SD 1.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 808-723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kazuo Todd', written in a cursive style.

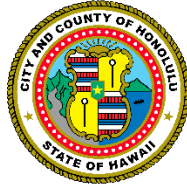
KAZUO TODD
Chair

KT:GL

HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

636 South Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-5007
Phone: 808-723-7139 Fax: 808-723-7111 Internet: www.honolulu.gov/hfd

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR



SHELDON K. HAO
FIRE CHIEF

JASON SAMALA
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

March 13, 2023

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
The State House
State Capitol, Room 426
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair
Committee on Energy
and Environmental Protection
The State House
State Capitol, Room 436
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Lowen:

Subject: Senate Bill (SB) 409, Senate Draft (SD) 1 Relating to Fire Prevention

My name is Sheldon K. Hao, Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The HFD supports SB 409, SD 1, which appropriates approximately \$1,500,000 each for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 for the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife's (DOFAW) community fuels reduction project to support wildland fire prevention and hazardous fuel reduction measures.

The DOFAW is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State of Hawaii's (State) forested watersheds (or 25% of the land area in Hawaii) and supports federal and county responders on remaining areas in the State. Due to climate change and associated droughts, the annual area burned in Hawaii has increased in past decades. In fact, the percentage of land area burned annually in Hawaii exceeds the national average and, in some years, it surpassed the 12 most fire-prone western states.

The DOFAW's fire and emergency response mandates require specialized equipment. The DOFAW collaborates with the county fire departments to extinguish fires on forested land managed by the DOFAW and residential areas (the wildland-urban

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair
Page 2
March 13, 2023

interface) managed by the counties. The DOFAW provides specialty expertise, equipment, and other resources in these environments which the county fire departments do not possess due to training, funding, or mission requirement. The Department also assists counties during natural disasters, such as hurricanes and lava flows.

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

The HFD urges your committee's support on the passage of SB 409, SD 1.

Should you have questions, please contact Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 808-723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO
Fire Chief

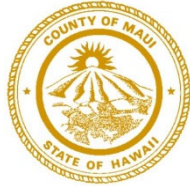
SKH/SB:cn

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

KEKUHAUPIO R. AKANA
Managing Director

BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Fire Chief

GAVIN L.M. FUJIOKA
Deputy Fire Chief



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 DAIRY ROAD
KAHULUI, MAUI, HAWAII 96732
www.mauicounty.gov

March 13, 2023

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 426
Honolulu, HI 96813

The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair
Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 436
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Lowen,

**SUBJECT: SENATE BILL (SB) 409, SENATE DRAFT (SD) 1, RELATING TO
FIRE PREVENTION**

I am Bradford K. Ventura, member of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department. The SFC supports SB 409, SD 1, which appropriates approximately \$1,500,000 for fiscal year (FY) 2024 and the same sum for FY 2025 for the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) community fuels reduction projection to support wildlife prevention and hazardous fuel reduction measures.

The DOFAW is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State of Hawaii's forested watersheds (or 25% of the land area in Hawaii) and supports federal and county responders on remaining areas in the State. Due to climate change and associated droughts, the annual area burned annually in Hawaii exceeds the national average and, in some years, it surpasses the 12 most fire-prone western states.

The DOFAW's fire and emergency response mandates require specialized equipment. The DOFAW collaborates with the county fire departments to extinguish fires on forested land managed by the DOFAW and residential areas (the wildland-urban interface) managed by the counties. The DOFAW provides specialty expertise, equipment, and other resources in these environments which the county fire departments do not possess due to training, funding, or mission

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair

The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair

Page 2

March 13, 2023

requirement. The Department also assists counties during natural disasters, such as hurricanes and lava flows.

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

The SFC urges your committees support on the passage of SB 409, SD 1.

If you have any questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at (808) 723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,



BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Fire Chief

Big Island Invasive Species
Committee
23 E. Kawili St
Hilo Hi 96771
(808) 933-3340



March 16, 2023

House Committee on Water & Land
Chair Ichiyama
Vice Chair Poepoe

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Chair Lowen
Vice Chair Cochran

RE: SB409

Aloha,

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee strongly supports SB409 which would appropriate funds to DLNR to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels on the landscape, particularly on lands adjacent to communities.

As an organization on the front lines of fighting invasive plants, we are all too familiar with the difficult job of controlling invasive weeds like fountain grass, a dangerous fire fuel which contributes each year to bigger, hotter and more dangerous fires on our island. With each fire, we lose more native vegetation and create more space for the incursion of invasive grasses which in turn lead to more fuel for fire – a vicious cycle that can only be broken with intensive, boots-on-the-ground effort.

We support the passage of this bill because we know vegetation management is essential for reducing wildfire hazards, creating safer conditions for firefighters, and serving as a key climate adaptation strategy as climate change increases our wildfire risks. The requested funds will be used to create firebreaks between communities and watersheds, reduce flammable grasses on the landscape through projects like managed grazing, and provide water infrastructure for grazing and fire suppression. On February 15th, a webinar on wildfire in Hawaii was held as part of Hawaii Invasive Species Awareness month. We encourage all members of the committee to become more familiar with the growing wildfire threat and its relationship to invasive species by watching the recording (it will be posted on the HISC YouTube page at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFT6SAASZIUxd_XgZMCjGsQ).

For every dollar we spend on wildfire prevention and mitigation, our state can **save five times more** in damages, along with saving homes, livelihoods, and lives.

Big Island Invasive Species
Committee

23 E. Kawili St
Hilo Hi 96771
(808) 933-3340



We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information.

Mahalo,

Franny Kinslow Brewer
Communications Director
fbrewer@hawaii.edu

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 9:18:21 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Harner	Pu'uana'hulu Firewise Committee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB409 regarding appropriating funds for wildfire fuels reduction. Our group is one of 15 Firewise committees across the islands doing fuel mitigation, and we work with very little money. As wildfires are getting more frequent, this work is very important to keep our neighborhoods safe. Please pass this legislation and help us prevent wildfires. Thank you.

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 9:55:26 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas English	Mahanalua Nui HOA	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Water & Land and Energy & Environmental Protection and Finance Committees

Communities like ours along with our great Maui FD desperately need financial help to reduce vegetation. What we experienced less than 3 months ago was another warning that something needs to be done. With the recent rains, our West side looks beautiful and green. What is hidden within this beauty is the vegetation that will dry up and become fuel for wildfires. Now is the time to proactively address the vegetation, not only for preservation of our beautiful land, our businesses and homes, but for the life safety of our citizens and firefighters.

Thank You

Tom English

Secretary, Mahanalua Nui Homeowners Association

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 11:58:00 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Jones	Hydroponics Alternatives LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Poepoe, Vice Chair Cochran, and Honorable Committee Members:

I submit this testimony to SUPPORT SB 409, SD 1 that appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels specifically on lands adjacent to residential/farming communities. Wildfires pose a major threat to farms like ours in Wai`anae and to residential and farm communities spanning the entire State of Hawai`i. Actually, since moving onto our farm community in 2012, we have experienced major crop and structural damage due to wildfires in June 2012, November 2016, August 2018 and July 2020 – though this latter fire caused mostly smoke damage. Every time our guard dogs whine when hearing emergency vehicle sirens, we are sniffing the air for any signs of smoke or potential fires starting. The DLNR’s financial ability to properly manage vegetation will reduce these wildfire hazards in order to create safer conditions for fire-fighters and to successfully adapt to climate change conditions – which have also increased wildfire risks for us in Wai`anae and throughout Hawai`i.

To effectively prevent/reduce the likelihood of wildfires, the DLNR urgently needs funds for dedicated staffing and equipment to reduce hazardous fuels that pose threats to our Hawai`i watersheds and also to nearby communities. These requested funds will be used to create firebreaks between communities and watersheds, reduce flammable grasses through managed grazing and forest restoration plus providing water infrastructure for tree planting, grazing AND fire suppression. Such funding support will ALSO help safeguard key public infrastructure such as powerlines and communication facilities.

For ALL of the above reasons and in the interest of safeguarding not only our residential and farming communities, but also critical infrastructure for all of Hawai`i’s people, we urge your Committee to please pass SB409, SD 1 – with an effective date of ideally 07/01/2023, BUT not later than 07/01/204 to help DLNR reduce wildfire risks as soon as possible.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB409, SD 1.

Nancy Jones

Hydroponics Alternatives LLC

PO Box 1472, Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: nancyhydroalt@gmail.com

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 9:54:17 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 10:24:02 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Gordon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please Support SB 409. Additional funding is required to help mitigate against wildfires. As a member of the Waikoloa Firewise Committee, I am keenly aware that the Waikoloa area is in the top list of areas most prone to wildfires in the entire State. In addition, large areas of the entire State are in drought conditions, which appear to worsen every year.

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 8:53:13 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support hazardous fuels reduction funding, to include ecological restoration of flammable fuel areas, and installation of shaded fuel breaks,

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 11:59:49 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zeb Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Poepoe, Vice Chair Cochran, and Honorable Committee Members:

I submit this testimony supporting SB 409, SD 1 that appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels specifically on lands adjacent to residential/farming communities. Wildfires pose a major threat to farms like ours in Wai`anae and to residential and farm communities spanning the entire State of Hawai`i. Actually, since moving onto our farm community in 2012, we have experienced major crop and structural damage due to wildfires in June 2012, November 2016, August 2018 and July 2020 – though this latter fire caused mostly smoke damage. Every time our guard dogs whine when hearing emergency vehicle sirens, we constantly sniff the air for any signs of smoke or potential fires starting – a now-automatic reflex while trying to farm in Wai`anae. The DLNR’s financial ability to properly manage vegetation will reduce these wildfire hazards in order to create safer conditions for fire-fighters and to successfully adapt to climate change conditions – which have also increased wildfire risks for us in Wai`anae and throughout Hawai`i.

To effectively prevent/reduce the likelihood of wildfires, the DLNR urgently needs funds for dedicated staffing and equipment to reduce hazardous fuels that pose threats to our Hawai`i watersheds and also to nearby communities. These requested funds will be used to create firebreaks between communities and watersheds, reduce flammable grasses through managed grazing and forest restoration plus providing water infrastructure for tree planting, grazing AND fire suppression. Such funding support will ALSO help safeguard key public infrastructure such as powerlines and communication facilities.

For ALL of the above reasons and in the interest of safeguarding not only our residential and farming communities, but also critical infrastructure for all of Hawai`i’s people, we urge your Committee to please pass SB409, SD 1 – with an effective date of ideally 07/01/2023, BUT not later than 07/01/204 to help DLNR reduce wildfire risks as soon as possible.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB409, SD 1.

Zeb Jones

PO Box 1462/ Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: zebbe3442@gmail.com

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 4:51:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Forester	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for accepting my testimony in support of SB409. Wildfire is an ongoing issue throughout the State, though it is not always top of mind. Directing funding to wildfire prevention and fuels management will save lives and property.

Please, lets do something about wildfire now, rather than spending money to sweep up the ashes.

Mahalo

Heather Forester

SB-409-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 12:13:40 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Aina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I concur with DLNR Chairperson Dawn Chang's testimony relating to Senate Bill 409, Senate Draft 1 which proposes to appropriate funds to DLNR to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels on the landscape, particularly on lands adjacent to communities.

I live in Waikoloa Village where, in 2021, we were evacuated due to the advancing Mana fire. Fuel loads in high wind areas like the leeward, dry side of Hawai'i Island pose an extreme fire risk to not only native species of plants and animals, to our watershed and reefs, but also to the property and health of our communities. Air quality was diminished for months after the Mana fire as the winds kicked up clouds of dust.

There are solutions, but they require funding. Creating and maintaining firebreaks is one solution, but in windy places, they won't suffice. Reducing the fuel loads will take solutions like managed grazing, followed by forest restoration. Protected lands, like the Palila Sanctuary will not survive a wildland fire, if the fuels loads surrounding the sanctuary are not properly managed.

The funds needed to fight historic wild fires could be reduced if attention as paid to proactive steps to reduce the threat. Please support this initiative.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Shelly Aina
Chair, Waikoloa Village Association Firewise Committee
HWMO Wildfire Home Assessor
HWMO Community Wildfire Ambassador