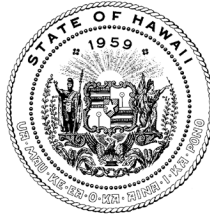


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Tuesday, March 22, 2022
9:30 AM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 325, Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 777, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO THE CRIMINAL DESTRUCTION OF TREES**

Senate Bill 777, Senate Draft 2 proposes to establish a criminal statute for the criminal destruction of a tree on state or county property punishable as a misdemeanor. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and offers comments.**

Trees are critical for addressing the climate crisis. In addition to carbon sequestration, trees reduce ambient temperatures (urban heat island effect) and stormwater runoff, and provide wildlife habitat, human health, and quality of life benefits. New seedlings take years before they realize their full suite of ecological and human health benefits, but existing mature trees provide significant benefits now, underscoring their value and the importance of their protection.

Responding to the damage or destruction of trees offers an opportunity for education about the benefits of trees, which may minimize such activity in the future.

The Department suggests the following word changes **in bold** to accommodate undesired, invasive trees:

Original:

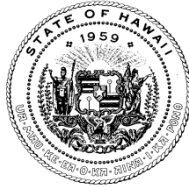
(5) This section shall not apply to any state or county employee acting within the scope of employment."

Suggested change:

(5) This section shall not apply to any state or county employee acting within the scope of employment or to any volunteer or service group that has permission to remove undesirable trees such as hazard trees, invasive trees, or trees harming cultural sites."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



TESTIMONY BY:

JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors
ROSS M. HIGASHI
EDUARDO P. MANGLALLAN
PATRICK H. MCCAIN
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 22, 2022

9:30 A.M.

State Capitol, Conference Room 325/Teleconference

S.B. 777, S.D. 2
RELATING TO RELATING TO THE CRIMINAL DESTRUCTION OF TREES

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** this bill that will make it a criminal misdemeanor offence for an individual to damage or destroy a tree on state or county property. DOT welcomes the changes that were made to this measure that would exempt state and county employees, to allow us to conduct maintenance activities on trees. However, this exemption should also be extended to include agents acting on behalf of government entities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Written Testimony before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Tuesday, March 22, 2022 (9:30 am)

RE: SB777 SD2 RELATING TO THE CRIMINAL DESTRUCTION OF TREES

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection:

Trees for Honolulu's Future (TFHF) is a non-profit organization with a vision for a tree-filled island that preserves and enhances our quality of life, especially in the face of climate change.

We support the above-referenced bill, which establishes a criminal statute for the criminal destruction of a tree on state or county property punishable as a misdemeanor. At the risk of sounding trite, "who speaks for the trees"? They do not have a voice, they deserve protection.

This is a good chance to reiterate the multiple benefits of trees well documented by research. Trees create shade and use evapotranspiration to lower temperature. Trees also recharge groundwater and decrease surface runoff protecting our reefs. Trees trap pollutants and store CO2. Trees calm traffic and so much more. They are indeed, valuable infrastructure.

We ask that this bill be passed. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Daniel Dinell, President

HONOLULU is HOT TREES are COOL

Visit us: www.TreesForHonolulu.org Contact us: info@TreesForHonolulu.org Voice/Fax/Text: 808-707-6353
P.O. Box 12051, Honolulu, Hawaii 96828

SB-777-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2022 7:24:09 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/22/2022 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Trees are strong allies in addressing the climate emergency. This bill would help protect them. The Climate Protectors Hawaii strongly support this bill!

SB-777-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 10:36:54 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/22/2022 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We do need to protect our trees that sustain life as well as beautify our environment. However you might want to add some exceptions into this bill so that it would not apply, for example, to invasive trees such as albizia, if that tree presents a hazard to life or property, or to diseased trees, such as trees carrying rapid ohia death or other pathogens or pests that could infect other precious trees.