

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, HAWAII 96809

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 Committee on  
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, February 07, 2023  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 285  
RELATING TO FIRE PREVENTION

House Bill 285 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 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 provide water infrastructure for grazing and fire suppression.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in 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](http://www.labor.hawaii.gov)

February 3, 2023

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

Dear Chair Ichiyama:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 285 Relating to Fire Prevention

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC supports HB 285, 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 Department also assists counties during natural disasters, such as hurricanes and lava flows.

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair

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February 3, 2023

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 HB 285.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 808-723-7169 or [glum@honolulu.gov](mailto:glum@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kazuo Todd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kazuo" being more prominent than the last name "Todd".

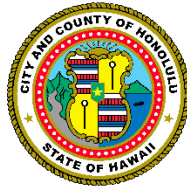
KAZUO TODD  
Chair

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](http://www.honolulu.gov/hfd)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR



SHELDON K. HAO  
FIRE CHIEF

JASON SAMALA  
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

February 3, 2023

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

Dear Chair Ichiyama:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 285 Relating to Fire Prevention

I am Sheldon K. Hao, Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The HFD supports HB 285, which appropriates approximately \$1,500,000 each for fiscal years (FY) 2024 and 2025 for the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife (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 State of Hawaii (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, surpasses the 12 most fire-prone western states.

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

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
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February 3, 2023

The HFD urges your committee's support on the passage of HB 285.

Should you have questions, please contact Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 808-723-7169 or [glum@honolulu.gov](mailto:glum@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,

for SHELDON K. HAO  
Fire Chief

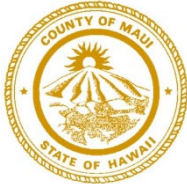
SKH/GL:cn

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**KEKUHAUPIO R. AKANA**  
Acting 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](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

February 6, 2023

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

Dear Chair Ichiyama:

**SUBJECT: HOUSE BILL (HB) 285 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 (MFD). The SFC supports HB 285, 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 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.

Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair

February 6, 2023

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The SFC urges your committee's support on the passage of HB 285.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Ventura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BRADFORD K. VENTURA  
Fire Chief

6 February 2023

Dear Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair and Honorable Committee Members,

**The Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) supports House Bill 285**, which proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land & Natural Resources to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels on the landscape, particularly on lands adjacent to communities.

As you may know, nearly a quarter of our state's lands are covered in non-native, flammable grasslands, and this footprint is ever expanding with each subsequent fire. Vegetation management is key for reducing wildfire hazards, increasing protection of our watersheds and the communities and public infrastructure that are adjacent to them.

This bill will complement and enhance the work being done by our organization alongside various agency and community partners across the state to reduce wildfire risk. Two of our collaborative, multi-partner, cross-boundary programs include the Pacific Fire Exchange, a fire science communication program that is co-led by us and the University of Hawai'i, and Hawaii's Firewise® USA Communities Program that supports and connects 18 communities across 4 islands on their awareness-raising and risk-reducing actions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Andrea (Nani) Barretto and Elizabeth Pickett  
Co-Executive Directors  
Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization