

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1839 HD2
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Hearing Date: 3/13/2024

Room Number: 224

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and
3 personnel priorities.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department supports this measure that seeks to fund long-term air
5 monitoring in areas impacted by the 2023 Maui wildfires. The type and amount of long-term air
6 monitoring, which we assume to be post-cleanup/disposal, has not been determined. Our
7 recommendation is that the air monitoring be guided by the air sampling results (e.g., for each
8 affected region on Maui, the type and duration of air monitoring would be adjusted according to
9 the obtained air quality data).

10 The Department requests that the Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) I position be
11 amended to an EHS IV and offers the amendment on page 4, lines 1-2 of this testimony. The
12 Department of Human Resource Development does not provide for hiring into EHS I positions
13 and all air quality monitoring EHS positions in the Department are level IV positions. The EHS
14 IV is needed to assist with duties to set up and maintain air quality monitoring equipment, review
15 and validate data, and investigate and assess any spikes or unusual occurrences in the air quality
16 being monitored. Indications are that recent events such as wildfires, including those that

1 occurred in Lahaina, Kula, Olinda, and Mililani, will increase as climate change impacts weather
2 patterns and adds to the demand on Department monitoring and response resources. Moreover,
3 other natural events, including volcanic eruptions, can also occur, requiring additional air
4 monitoring to assess air quality and protect public health. During unpredicted events, staff are
5 taken away from their regular duties and the program must catch up later or risk falling into
6 noncompliance with federal regulations.

7 Three types of air monitoring have been used during the post-wildfire cleanup period.

- 8 1) Air quality sampling stations are the most extensive, and expensive, option which collects air
9 to test for specific pollutants such as asbestos and heavy metals, and requires contracting due
10 to special equipment and capabilities. During the cleanup phases, where heavy machinery
11 was disturbing and removing potentially contaminated material, this was a significant method
12 used in Kula and continues to be used during the cleanup in Lahaina. These stations are
13 highly accurate but require laboratory analysis and staff to collect, package, and ship
14 samples, and maintain the specialized equipment. The contract cost for a year of Lahaina
15 sampling with four stations is over \$4,000,000.00 at a cost of \$1,000,000.00 per station.
- 16 2) Environmental Beta Attenuation Mass monitors (E-BAMs) conduct near-regulatory
17 monitoring for particulates and provide data that is very accurate. While an E-BAM does not
18 identify specific pollutants as an air sampling station does, particulate matter is important
19 because it is an indicator of the levels of those pollutants of concern, such as metals, that
20 attach to ash and dust. Each E-BAM unit costs approximately \$20,000, not including the
21 costs for operation and maintenance, which would be performed by the EHS funded by this
22 measure.
- 23 3) PurpleAir sensors continuously test for fine particulate matter. While they are not as
24 accurate as E-BAMs, they are much less expensive, typically less than \$400 per unit, and
25 more easily deployed around the community allowing increased geographical coverage.
26 Moreover, the results from these sensors are readily accessible online (e.g., fire.airnow.gov).

27 Just as the monitoring methods differ, so too do the circumstances in each impacted area.
28 In Kula, where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed their debris removal work,
29 monitoring results which occurred over the duration of the cleanup showed that the levels for
30 asbestos were non-detectable, the metal levels were very low and all below the levels where

1 impacts to human health are expected, and the particulates were elevated at times, but were
2 mainly attributed to activities such as wood chipping of fallen trees and other non-debris removal
3 activities. As a result, the Department has removed the sampling stations and E-BAM monitors,
4 but continues to operate PurpleAir sensors at upcountry schools.

5 During the Lahaina debris removal, the Department's contractor is operating four air
6 sampling stations. The Department supplements that air monitoring by operating approximately
7 50 PurpleAir sensors and six E-BAMs, two of which belong to EPA and may be removed by
8 EPA once the Lahaina cleanup is done. The proposed contracted Department cost for the
9 one-year operation and maintenance of the six E-BAMs is over \$277,000.00. During the cleanup
10 and as it nears completion, the Department evaluates the data to determine whether current air
11 monitoring activity is sufficient. The Department believes that air monitoring should continue
12 throughout the debris removal, which is anticipated to take a year for Lahaina. After the cleanup
13 ends, if the data indicates good air quality, the expectation would be to end the operation of the
14 contracted air quality monitoring stations, continue to operate the E-BAMs for a period of time
15 as a precaution, and maintain PurpleAir sensors at key sensitive areas, such as schools, or other
16 areas for which continued air monitoring may be beneficial.

17 It should be noted that the one-year contract for the four Lahaina air sampling stations is
18 scheduled to end on February 28, 2025. If the debris removal work continues beyond that time,
19 additional funding would be necessary to extend the contract. This could include the last four
20 months of State fiscal year 2025 and possibly go beyond that time.

21 The Department has placed PurpleAir sensors around the temporary disposal site in
22 Olowalu. Air monitoring at Olowalu could be expanded through the use of E-BAMs while
23 disposal and temporary storage occurs. This would provide additional data in determining
24 whether increased air monitoring would be needed going forward. The Department believes that
25 additional air monitoring would also need to be assessed and implemented when the Lahaina
26 debris is moved from the temporary Olowalu site to the final permanent disposal site, once that
27 has been determined.

28 **Offered Amendments:** The Department respectfully suggests the following revision. Addition
29 appears as underlined and deletion appears as strikeout.

1 SECTION 2, page 2, lines 16-18: “(1) \$ annually for one full-time equivalent
2 (1.0 FTE) permanent environmental health specialist † IV position;”
3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the Senate Committees on
Health & Human Services,
Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs,
and Agriculture and Environment

In Consideration of House Bill No. 1839 HD2
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

To Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Wakai, Chair Gabbard, and the honorable members of the committees,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization that was initially formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and re-energized last year after the devastating Lahaina fires on August 8. Our organization is the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 20,000 supporters, engaged in emphasizing the importance of local voices and community-driven solutions.

Lahaina Strong stands in support of HB1839 HD2, a bill that appropriates funds for long-term monitoring of air quality for communities impacted by the Maui wildfires, as well as support for research efforts to better understand the environmental concerns linked to urban fires.

Both Lahaina and Kula, Maui suffered immense environmental impacts from last year's wildfires, and the bill's focus on ongoing assessment aligns with the critical need to address the lingering repercussions on our community's well-being.

We commend the diligent efforts of the House of Representatives' Environmental Remediation Working Group in thoroughly understanding the nuanced challenges faced by Maui after the fires. Their commitment to deriving comprehensive recommendations is a testament to their dedication to the welfare of our communities.

The proposed funding for long-term monitoring of air quality is not just a financial allocation but a recognition of the enduring responsibility to safeguard the health and safety of our residents. The wildfires have left lasting impacts on our environment, and a continued commitment to monitoring ensures that we can address emerging concerns and implement proactive measures for the well-being of our community members.

Moreover, we appreciate the bill's support for research efforts aimed at better understanding the environmental concerns linked to urban fires. This forward-thinking approach aligns with Lahaina Strong's mission of fostering a resilient and sustainable future for Lahaina. By investing in research, we can pave the way for informed decision-making and targeted interventions that address the unique challenges posed by post-wildfire environmental dynamics.

In conclusion, Lahaina Strong stands in full support of House Bill 1839 HD2 and its appropriations for vital long-term monitoring and research initiatives. We thank the Environmental Remediation Working Group for their comprehensive approach, and we believe that this bill if passed, will contribute significantly to the ongoing recovery and resilience of Lahaina.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Courtney Lazo, Jordan Ruidas & Pa'ele Kiakona

Lahaina Strong



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

March 13, 2024

HB1839 HD2, RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HB 1839 HD2, relating to the environment. 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, commercial buildings, vehicles and school facilities. As a result, this fire left behind high levels of dangerous toxicity, unlike wildfires that are limited to wood and natural materials.

It is our obligation to ensure a just recovery for Maui. That also entails allocating funding for long term monitoring of air and water quality in the communities impacted by the Maui wildfires. We need to understand how safe the affected areas are, to avoid causing further harm to impacted communities. This can be accomplished in part by long term monitoring of air and water quality.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

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Abby Simmons

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

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MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT and HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES and
PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 224
Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 1:01 PM**

To The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment
To The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services
To The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

SUPPORT HB1839 RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB1839.**

The Chamber notes that based on the findings and recommendations of the House of Representatives' environmental remediation working group, the wildfires that engulfed urban areas on Maui in 2023 contained more toxic chemicals than wildfires that simply consume wood and natural materials. Materials burned in urban fires can include household appliances, commercial appliances, vehicles, and construction materials, which can leave behind a variety of chemicals, contaminants, and debris that can persist in the ecosystem.

We agree that conducting air quality testing and contaminant testing is necessary to monitor the short- and long-term risks of the Maui wildfires to the ecosystem, community, and environment. **We would like to request that water quality testing be re-inserted to the bill's language as water quality (especially the nearby shore waters) is very important to proper recovery.**

For these reasons the Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB1839** and respectfully request consideration of our amendment request.

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.

HB-1839-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 5:27:59 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/13/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joe DiNardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In Strong Support of HB1839 HD2 – Joe DiNardo, Toxicologist, March 9, 2024

Hi, my name is Joe DiNardo. I have been a toxicologist since 1976 and I have worked with Hawaii on sunscreen issues since 2017. It is essential that Hawaii fund environmental testing because the amount and type of toxic materials that are available in the air, water and soil have significantly increase over the last few decades. Specifically, chemicals like PFAS can travel over 25 miles in the air with some of these chemicals staying in the air for up to 9 months. Additionally, some of these PFAS chemicals can last in the soil/water for up to 184 years and in human blood for up to 70 years. The EPA is tragically behind in protecting US citizens from chemical pollution - they are proposing a 4 parts per trillion (ppt) Maximum Contamination Level (MCL) for just drinking water for two PFAS chemicals - PFOA and PFOS. The dose that causes kidney cancer IN HUMANS is 0.007 ppt for PFOA and 1 ppt is the cancer causing dose for PFOS in animals. That is approximately 400 TIMES higher than the cancer dose that is KNOWN to produce human cancers and 4 times the levels that causes cancer in animals. In toxicology setting a dose this high above the carcinogenic levels would “normally” be call stupidity ... you cannot set a dose that is higher than the known cancer dose in humans and expect to protect the population!

The National Academies of Science committee found “SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE of an association for the following diseases and health outcomes: decreased antibody response (in adults and children), dyslipidemia (in adults and children), decreased infant and fetal growth, and increased risk of KIDNEY CANCER (in adults). AND found LIMITED OR SUGGESTIVE EVIDENCE of increased risk of BREAST CANCER (in adults), liver enzyme alterations (in adults and children), increased risk of pregnancy-induced hypertension (gestational hypertension and preeclampsia), increased risk of TESTICULAR CANCER (in adults), thyroid disease and dysfunction (in adults), and increased risk of ulcerative colitis (in adults).”

Maui, when last checked in 2022 it had approximately 1,600,000 ppt of PFOS in the ground water (Kahului Airport) ... that is 1.6 MILLION times above the dose that causes cancers in animals? With that said, Hawaii should also be moving towards testing the blood levels of its citizens. The EPA has finalized Method 1633 which establishes reasonable testing limits to identify 40 different PFAS analytes. This is the correct method to use to identify risk to people.

Lastly, PFAS are only one of the many environmental contaminants that we are all dealing with ... other toxic chemicals like Mercury can travel up to 1,000 miles in the air, so perhaps focusing

on Maui is good, but testing all of the Islands would be better ... FYI ... Pearl Harbor had 2,000,000 ppt of PFAS (again, this is MILLIONS of times above the dose that causes significant health issues and CANCERS) ... I cannot emphasize enough the level of toxic chemicals (PFAS, Bisphenols, Phthalates, Heavy Metals, Pesticides ... etc.) that industry and the federal government has allowed us to be exposed.

Please support environmental testing of at least PFAS chemicals and please consider testing your citizens blood levels ... this is a significant problem that many States are having to deal with ... we must stop CHEMICAL POLLUTION if we all wish to continue living on this planet.

Mahalo for all your efforts ... Please support HB 1839 HD2 ... Most Sincerely, Joe DiNardo
(chemicalsrtoxic@gmail.com)

HB-1839-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 9:31:17 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/13/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am testifying in strong support of HB 1839 which funds long-term monitoring and research of air quality for the communities impacted by the maui wildfire. Luckily it is very rare that entire towns burn down, that being said, there are a lot of unknown about the long term health affects. EPA and DOH have given advice that it is safe to be in certain areas in, near and adjacent to the burn zone. In the long term if our people predominantly become sick, it will be crucial for other areas that may experience a similar tragedy to have real data as they move forward. Since Maui and Hawaii has received so much support from around the world, this data and information is our way to pay it forward should other areas in the future experience a similar tragedy.

Mahalo for your service and commitment to our communities,

Tamara Paltin

HB-1839-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:29:57 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/13/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Riley Bond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I support H.B. 1839, which addresses the urgent need for environmental monitoring and research following the devastating fires in Lahaina.

The bill allocates funds for long-term air quality monitoring and research to understand the impacts of urban fires on our health and environment. By investing in specialists and expanding air sampling efforts, we can protect Lahaina residents and our ecosystem.

Unlike wildfires that consume primarily natural materials, urban fires can release a variety of toxic chemicals and contaminants from household and commercial appliances, vehicles, and construction materials. These pollutants pose significant risks to both human health and the ecosystem, highlighting the importance of conducting thorough air quality and contaminant testing.

Exceeding the expenditure ceiling is necessary to address these critical concerns. I urge passage of H.B. NO. 1839 to safeguard our community's health and environment. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Riley Bond

HB-1839-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 4:11:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/13/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cedar Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1839 in regards to funding long-term monitoring and research of air quality for communities (namely Lahaina, Kula) that were impacted by Maui wildfires.

HB-1839-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 11:45:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/13/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1839 HD2, that appropriates funds for long-term monitoring of air quality for communities impacted by the Maui wildfires, as well as support for research efforts to better understand the environmental concerns linked to urban fires. These are crucial efforts for the community's well-being and to ensure a just recovery for Maui.

I urge you to PASS this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

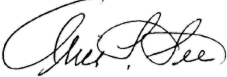
Deputy Director of Council Services
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

March 12, 2024

TO: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, and
Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair, and
Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and
Military Affairs
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair, and
Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 13, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1839,
HD2, RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

I **support** this measure to appropriate funds for air quality monitoring in communities impacted by the Maui wildfires.

I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support** this measure for the following reasons:

1. It protects Maui County residents from health issues caused by air degradation from the 2023 wildfires and recovery efforts.
2. The House Environmental Remediation Working Group recommended funding and support to further ongoing monitoring, sampling, and testing activities in West Maui.
3. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine urge further research into the chemistry of urban wildfires and the harmful long-term health impacts to people in urban areas.
4. The World Health Organization concluded that when wildfires impact urban areas, the materials burned contain more toxic chemicals than from wildfires that consume wood and other natural material.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.

HB-1839-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 1:32:04 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/13/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.

LATE

HB-1839-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 4:05:06 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/13/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees on Health and Human Services, Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs, and Agriculture and Environment,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am a resident of Lahaina. I am writing to support HB1839 HD2 with requests.

While I agree that we need funding for long-term monitoring of air quality and research, I feel that this bill falls short of what we need.

There is also a need for testing ground water and soil, and right now this testing is being run by private nonprofit organizations. They have been regularly struggling to get the funding for these testing measures, and this needs to be a priority of our government.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jackie Keefe