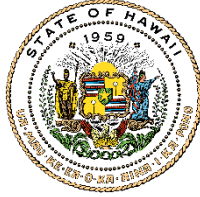


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
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

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO  
ACTING 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, January 30, 2024  
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1841  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

HB1841 appropriates funds to DLNR for operating expenses, equipment, the establishment of positions, and capital improvement projects to support wildfire emergency response. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure.**

The Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State of Hawai'i's forested watersheds (or 26% of the land area in Hawai'i) and supports federal and county responders on other lands in the State. Due to climate change and associated droughts, the annual area burned in Hawai'i has grown in past decades. The percentage of land area burned annually in Hawai'i exceeds the national average, and in some years, it surpasses the 14 most fire-prone western states.

DOFAW's fire and emergency response mandates require specialized equipment. DOFAW collaborates with the county fire departments to extinguish fires on forested lands and lands in the wildland-urban interface managed by the counties. DOFAW provides specialty expertise, equipment, and other resources in these environments. The Department also assists counties during natural disasters, such as hurricanes and lava flows.

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)

January 26, 2024

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) 1841 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC supports HB1841, which appropriates funds to DLNR for operating expenses, equipment, the establishment of positions, and capital improvement projects to support wildfire emergency response.

The DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (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.

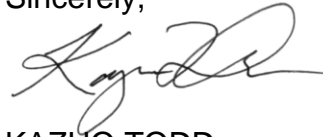
The DOFAW's expertise and collaboration with the county fire departments has been invaluable in protecting residences, buildings, and critical infrastructure from the encroachment of wildland-urban interface fires throughout Hawaii.

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
Page 2  
January 26, 2024

The SFC urges your committee's support on the passage of HB1841.

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

Sincerely,

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

KAZUO TODD  
Chair

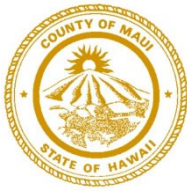
KT/GL:

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

**JOSIAH K. NISHITA**  
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)

January 26, 2024

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) 1841 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DLNR)**

I am Bradford K. Ventura, member of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department. The SFC supports HB 1841 which appropriates funds to DLNR for operating expenses, equipment, the establishment of positions, and capital improvement projects to support wildfire emergency response.

The DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (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.

The SFC urges your committee's support on the passage of HB1841.

If you have any 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".

BRADFORD K. VENTURA  
Fire Chief

**HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT  
KA 'OIHANA KINAI AHI O HONOLULU  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

636 SOUTH STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 723-7139 • FAX: (808) 723-7111 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



SHELDON K. HAO  
FIRE CHIEF  
LUNA NUI KINAI AHI  
  
JASON SAMALA  
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF  
HOPE LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

January 29, 2024

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

Dear Chair Ichiyama:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 1841 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

I am Sheldon K. Hao, Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The HFD supports HB 1841, which appropriates funds to the DLNR for operating expenses, equipment, the establishment of positions, and capital improvement projects to support wildfire emergency response.

The DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) is the primary responder for wildland fires across 1,368,002 acres of the State of Hawai'i's forested watersheds (or 25% of the land area in Hawai'i) and supports federal and county responders on remaining areas in the state. Due to climate change and associated droughts, the annual area burned in Hawai'i has grown in past decades. In fact, the percentage of land area burned annually in Hawai'i 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  
January 29, 2024  
Page 2

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 Hawai'i.

The HFD urges your committee's support on the passage of HB 1841.

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

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO  
Fire Chief

SKH/GL:cn



## TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

JANUARY 30, 2024

### HB 1841, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

#### POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HB 1841, relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. 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 investing in positions and programs at the Department of Land and Natural Resources that mitigate future emergencies. 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.

The updated hazard mitigation plan contains statistics on how many people by county are at risk from wildfire hazards. For Honolulu, 427,293 people could potentially be affected by wildfires, which was listed as the highest risk with a risk factor of 5.7. Maui County also has wildfires as its highest emergency risk with a score of 5.8 and 81,424 people at risk. On Kaua'i, wildfires carry a 5.6 risk level and threaten 27,604 people. Hawai'i Island has a wildfire risk score of 4.6 and 32,080 people at risk.

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





January 30, 2024

House Water & Land Committee  
Chair Ichiyama  
Vice Chair Poepoe  
Members of the Committee  
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: The Imperative of Allocating Adequate Funding to Protect Natural Resources  
Support HB 1841, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

Aloha!

Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 1841, relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. At its core, our recommendation is for Hawai'i to significantly increase funding for natural resource management and restoration. How we protect and manage our natural resources will determine whether our children and future generations inherit a healthy, safe, and beautiful environment. This bill is an important step toward meeting DLNR's expenditure goals.

Natural resources are the lifeblood of our pae 'āina, providing us with the essentials for survival and the foundation for Hawaii's economy, our very society. These resources include clean air and water, fertile soil, living coral reefs, stable coastlines and beaches, biodiversity and healthy forests. We commend the legislature, cognizant of the local and global threats to these riches, for declaring Hawaii to be the first state in the nation to declare a climate emergency. Protecting and restoring these resources is a moral, economic, and ecological imperative.

Based on the foregoing, we support this bill and strongly advocate for broadening the projects, programs, and activities that can be funded through these resources and for prioritizing environmentally sound wildfire prevention strategies. For example, removing flammable nonnative plants and restoring the site with less flammable native plants may be one of the most beneficial strategies for many areas. Just removing vegetation without restoration could result in flammable nonnative plants growing in the treatment sites creating a greater fire risk over time.

We also respectfully urge you to broaden the bill to include other forms of natural resources restoration that protects our communities and environment including:

- Coral reef restoration that can help protect our beaches and coastal communities from sea level rise and storm surges, while also protecting the fisheries that draw tourists and sustain local residents;
- Watershed and forest restoration that protects our water quality and supplies, in addition to reducing the risks of fire;

Page Two

- Grants to local communities to assist them in reducing their fire risks and restoring their natural resources.

The Maui wildfires have now amplified to every resident, and indeed the world, that no region is immune from the impact of this climate crisis and the importance of protecting and properly managing our natural resources.

We are a coalition of individuals and organizations committed to supporting better management of the state's natural resources for the protection of our communities, our water supplies, our economy, and our environment. We estimate that an additional \$360 million annually is needed to close the current budget shortfall in protecting our islands against climate threats, wildfires, and the impacts of over-tourism. We support this measure for its potential to help close that gap.

Preventing damage to natural resources is more cost-effective than trying to restore them once they have been degraded. For example, wildfire prevention is significantly more cost-effective than paying for the cost of responding to wildfires and restoring damaged communities and natural resources. The loss of loved ones and the polarizing effects of protracted litigation also weigh heavily on all of us. Legislators who allocate funding for protection and restoration are, in essence, making a sound long-term investment in their constituents, in community well-being, in our shared environment, and in the quality of life that our children and future generations will inherit.

We have a moral responsibility to protect the natural resources that sustain life in our islands. Future generations depend on the decisions we make today. Legislators have a unique role in shaping policies that reflect our ethical obligation to safeguard the environment for all living beings.

In conclusion, there are numerous compelling reasons why legislators should approve funding to protect, restore, and manage Hawaii's magnificent and irreplaceable natural resources. Disaster resilience, climate change mitigation, clean water and air, sustainable agriculture, economic benefits, public health, long-term cost savings, biodiversity conservation, and ethical responsibility all underscore the importance of such investments. By allocating the necessary funds, legislators can secure a brighter and more sustainable future for all. It is a responsibility that cannot be ignored, and the benefits far outweigh the costs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that our natural resources are at the forefront of policy-leaders' minds and that the state budget reflects these priorities.

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.



**MAUI**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 430  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2024 AT 9:00AM**

To The Honorable Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Water & Land,

**SUPPORT OF HB1841 RELATING TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Maui Chamber of Commerce strongly supports this bill to appropriate funds to DLNR for operating expenses, equipment, the establishment of positions, and capital improvement projects to support wildfire emergency response.

DLNR is a key partner in preventing and responding to wildfire emergencies. Given the prevalence of wildfires in Hawaii over the last several years as well as the Maui wildfires disaster, it is critical that DLNR have the necessary resources going forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela Tumpap". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

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-1841**

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 2:10:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zhantell Lindo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1841. I support the efforts to adopt the Wildfire prevention working group in their recommendation to appropriate funds to maintain and update wildfire-specific equipment and wildfire-suppression infrastructure, statewide.

I strongly believe that there is an urgent need to plan and implement effective strategies in protecting our lands and people against the devastation of wildfires. Most of our island communities do not presently, have the capacity to handle widespread and multi-fire events like the Maui fires of August 2023. Manpower, water resources, fire-suppression equipment and communication limitations make our island communities susceptible to failure against wildfires. In an effort to build the needed capacity and protect ourselves and the quality of life in our island communities, we must be willing to prioritize the finances necessary to solidify beneficial strategies, effective planning and well-trained, qualified personnel.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my support of HB 1841 and mahalo you for your time and consideration.

With Aloha

Zhantell Dudoit Lindo - Molokai, Hawaii

**HB-1841**

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 3:44:22 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keomailani Hanapi Hirata	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha 'aina kakou!

Mahalo to the Water and Land Committee for providing and facilitating this space for community engagement through public testimony.

My name is Keomailani Hanapi Hirata, a keiki o ka 'aina o Molokai and I am requesting to testify remotely via ZOOM in support of HB184 relating to DLNR, adopt a recommendation of the wildfire prevention working group appropriating funds to maintain and update wildfire-specific equipment and wildfire-suppression infrastructure statewide.

Please email me the ZOOM link for me to participate and give my testimony remotely.

Email: kahenawai3@yahoo.com

Mahalo,

Keomailani Hanapi Hirata