

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
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doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2805 HD1**  
RELATING TO HEALTH

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

SENATOR DONNA MERCADO KIM, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Hearing: Wednesday, March 13, 2024; 3:00 PM; Conference Room 225

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be
- 2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
- 3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request.
- 4 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure.
- 5 **Department Testimony:** The Communicable Disease and Public Health Nursing Division
- 6 (CDPHND) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.
- 7 The Department of Health supports this measure to fund the University of Hawai‘i’s Economic
- 8 Research Organization’s multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires. This
- 9 study is vital to enhance the understanding of the broad and long-term health impacts of
- 10 wildfires and other natural disasters on the diverse communities of Hawai‘i.
- 11 The Maui wildfires caused not only immediate devastation but has also created long-term
- 12 health risks to the communities impacted, many of which are unknown. This study will allow
- 13 public health workers to better understand these health risks to guide resource allocation and
- 14 prevention activities. Further, the study’s design as a prospective cohort study using a pre-

1 existing multiethnic cohort for comparisons is vital to understanding the many ways Maui's  
2 diverse communities have been impacted, especially those communities that were already  
3 experiencing inequitable health outcomes before the wildfires. Understanding these different  
4 health outcomes is crucial for state and local organizations, as well as policymakers, to best  
5 allocate resources and develop health interventions and policies that meet the specific needs of  
6 these communities. In addition, strengthening the local capacity to investigate and monitor  
7 post-disaster health effects will benefit Hawaii into the future.

8 The Department is available to provide technical assistance and support the project from a  
9 public health perspective and staff are collaborating with the Investigators.

10 The Department also recognizes the significance of this study in contributing to our broader  
11 understanding of the human health impacts of wildfires and other climate-related disasters.  
12 Climate change is a public health crisis, and our State needs as much data as possible to  
13 strengthen our public health resiliency as we move into the future.

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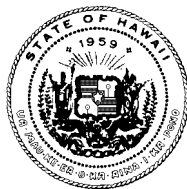
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19 **Offered Amendments:** None

20 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 12, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senate Committee on Higher Education

The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety & Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.**

Hearing: March 13, 2024, Time 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 225, State Capitol & Video Conference

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this important measure and respectfully requests that appropriations not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** This bill appropriates moneys for the University of Hawai'i to conduct a multiethnic cohort study and registry regarding the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The University of Hawaii –Economic Research Organization (UHERO) and the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) are best positioned to conduct the multiethnic cohort study and registry regarding the short and long-term effects of the Maui Wildfires. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the same group of researchers from JABSOM conducted community-relevant research that informed planning and response activities. Already, this study's preliminary findings have led to communication between researchers and the Med-QUEST

division regarding available health care coverage. Notably, study participants may gain insight into their exposure as they contribute to the community's data necessary for recovery and future planning needs.

Other states impacted by fire, such as [California](#), have solicited proposals for *retrospective* studies of exposure to wildfire smoke and are examining direct health effects on individuals with asthma, medication use, hospitalizations, physician/emergency department visits for respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and impacts in disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups. Notably, the California proposal aims to estimate the health-related economic impacts of exposure to wildfire-specific air pollutants.

Further, a significant priority and effort of the Maui recovery is developing short and long-term housing options for Maui residents. There is a growing body of research that identifies both housing quality and stability as significant social determinants of health. Housing quality, including overcrowding, is linked to physical illness as well as psychological distress. Housing instability can result in long-term health outcomes, school and employment disruption, and increased family stress. In housing stressed and high-rent environments like Hawaii's, low and fixed-income renters are particularly vulnerable to evictions that negatively impact short and long-term well-being.

Lastly, the DHS supports the study with the Director's staff serving on the study's community advisory board.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



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of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA

John A. Burns School of Medicine  
Department of Anatomy, Biochemistry and Physiology  
1800 East-West Rd, Office 215  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822  
Email: amaunakea@hawaii.edu

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislative Assembly,

My name is Alika Maunakea, and I am writing to express my emphatic support for HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This critical piece of legislation will bolster the efforts of the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization and its partners to conduct a comprehensive multiethnic cohort study. Our focus is the profound health impacts of the catastrophic 2023 Maui wildfires—a disaster whose effects are still felt across our communities.

Through HB 2805, we seek to equip the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with indispensable data that will be pivotal in addressing urgent community needs. Moreover, this information will be instrumental in guiding the recovery process and enhancing our collective preparedness for future calamities.

As a Native Hawaiian biomedical researcher, I am at the forefront of the Wildfire Exposure Study, which is a critical initiative to understand and combat health disparities, particularly among our most vulnerable groups, including Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Our state currently faces a significant data gap regarding the long-lasting repercussions of environmental hazards, like those post-wildfire, on the health of our people. The support of HB 2805 is not a mere contribution; it is an essential investment in the systemic collection of data that will inform and transform the approach of federal, state, and local entities, alongside community-based organizations, in instituting robust policies and practices.

Our efforts have already brought almost 700 participants into the fold of the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), and we are poised to extend our reach into schools and other community organizations. This expansion is not just about numbers; it's about laying down a roadmap for preventative strategies that will substantially curtail the escalating healthcare costs and social challenges linked to heightened morbidity and mortality rates among those affected by the wildfires. Ultimately saving money for the state of Hawai'i.

The absence of this study leaves us in the dark, unprepared for the ongoing challenges faced by Maui's communities, and vulnerable to the health risks of future disasters. This study is, therefore, essential for researchers and the state—each responsible for safeguarding the health and welfare of our diverse citizenry.

I humbly urge you to recognize the gravity of this initiative and to lend your crucial support. I request that you vote in favor of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH, thereby securing the state funding that will enable us to continue and expand this vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alika'.

Alika K. Maunakea, PhD  
Professor – Epigenomics and Health Disparities Research  
University of Hawai'i, Manoa  
(Honolulu resident of zip code 96826)



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

By

Denise Eby Konan, Dean  
College of Social Sciences

And

Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, Interim Dean  
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chairs Kim and Wakai, Vice Chairs Kidani and Elefante, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB 2805 HD1, provided its adoption does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. This measure appropriates moneys for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The full impact of the Maui wildfires and the resulting devastation on the affected communities remain largely unknown. The effect of the wildfires on the health and welfare of Maui residents as well as the needs of the community should be examined carefully so that informed decisions can be made toward the implementation of policies necessary to the recovery process.

This bill, which supports the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), within the Social Sciences Research Institute, in collaboration with the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), the UH Cancer Center, the UH Pacific Disaster Center (in Kihei, Maui), and numerous community-based organizations, seeks to conduct a comprehensive social and health study on the impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires on a diverse group of individuals. Additionally, the study aims to establish a registry of those affected by the wildfires to assess their long-term health and well-being, and the impacts on communities. We firmly believe that this research endeavor will provide invaluable information for the State of Hawai'i, local organizations, and policymakers.

The UHERO and related University of Hawai'i partners, including JABSOM, are ideally positioned to conduct a multiethnic cohort study which would provide policy makers with vital information concerning the Maui wildfires, health risks, and both short-term and long-term community needs.

UHERO has already begun the process of inviting Maui residents to participate in the study. Recent recruitment drives for the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), has been incredibly successful but also financially challenging. As of February 2024, nearly 700 participants across ten sessions were recruited. However, further recruitment efforts were paused as the initial seed funding from HCF was exhausted. Although additional bridge funding is being sought, a state commitment would be invaluable to ensure that the project completes both the recruitment and analysis of its findings.

Providing the funds needed to continue the study would benefit Maui and the state as a whole. The information gained from this study will add to the knowledge gained from work done in partnership between members of the Maui community, emergency, social and health systems with many University of Hawai'i units and additional JABSOM investigators exploring mental health, preparedness, response, recovery, and resiliency efforts. All of this will be helpful to mitigate the consequences of future disasters, including those attributed to climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



March 13, 2024

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair  
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Higher Education

Re: HB 2805 HD1– Relating to Health

Dear Chair Wakai, Chair Kim, Vice Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2805 HD1, which will appropriate moneys for the University of Hawai‘i to conduct a multiethnic cohort study and registry regarding the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires.

HMSA appreciates the efforts of the University of Hawaii to study the long-term health impacts of the 2023 West Maui wildfires. The data will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and the ability to address imminent community needs and inform the long-term recovery process with an empirical foundation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2805 HD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu  
Assistant Vice President  
Community and Government Relations



Re: Urgent Support for HB 2805 HD1: A Comprehensive Approach to Disaster Response and Health Research

To:

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

Hrg: Wednesday, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 15:00, Conference Room 225

Esteemed Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

I am writing to express our organization's full support for HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This bill represents a crucial step towards understanding and mitigating the long-term impacts of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires on our community's health and well-being. The establishment of this study and the creation of a registry for those affected are pivotal in guiding the recovery in real-time.

The Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES) exemplifies a meticulously crafted research approach, particularly in its dedication to reaching underserved immigrant and migrant communities, ensuring their representation is both meaningful and comprehensive. This proactive outreach is paired with the delivery of real-time initial health assessments, which are thoroughly explained to participants by the study team, guaranteeing immediate comprehension of their health status. This not only empowers participants with knowledge but also facilitates direct access to necessary medical resources for those in need. A testament to the study's impactful design was the swift assistance provided to a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) participant, who, despite not qualifying for insurance and presenting alarming health results, was successfully enrolled in a charitable health insurance plan within a week. This rapid response underscores the study's critical role in not just assessing but actively improving the health outcomes of its participants, showcasing an exemplary model of research that is as compassionate as it is comprehensive.

However, to sustain and expand these efforts, HB 2805 HD1 requires your support. Its passage will ensure that they can reach keiki and kupuna who we know are much more vulnerable. Through this bill, MauiWES can extend vital protection and support to these more vulnerable segments of our community.

We stand at a critical juncture in our recovery efforts. By supporting HB 2805 HD1, you are championing a comprehensive approach to disaster response—one that is informed by real-time data and community engagement. I urge you to consider the compelling evidence presented by the MauiWES [\(1\)](#) and to pass this bill, thereby affirming our collective commitment to a resilient and healthy future for all Maui residents regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Veronica Mendoza Jachowski  
Executive Director  
Roots Reborn

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

**Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair**

**Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair**

**COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair**

**Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 3 pm**

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2805, House Draft 1, Relating to Health**

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education, and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association in Hawai'i and across the nation is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

**The American Lung Association strongly supports House Bill 2805, HD1, relating to health. The bill appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.**

The importance of the information provided by the study in this bill cannot be overstated. As over 2,200 structures burned in Lahaina and Kula on August 8, 2023, many people across Maui County, including people on the islands of Moloka'i and Lāna'i, were exposed to a multitude of possible toxic elements that can cause serious disease. The Hawai'i State Department of Health reported elevated levels of arsenic, lead, antimony, cobalt, and copper in wildfire ash collected in Maui<sup>1</sup>. Many of these chemicals are known carcinogens that can cause deadly forms of cancer, including lung cancer, the number one cancer killer of men and women in Hawai'i, as well as a multitude of other lung diseases.<sup>2</sup>

The funding provided in HB 2805, HD1 will ensure that we are able to determine the long-term impacts of the Maui wildfires. Having this type of study is a hard lesson learned after the attack on the World Trade Center, where hundreds have since died of exposure to the toxic substances that burned on September 11, 2001, in New York City. Studies have shown that many people have died of lung and other cancers after being exposed to the dangerous fumes after the 9/11 attacks<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/lahaina-ash-characterization-testing-show-elevated-levels-of-toxic-substances/>

<sup>2</sup> NTP (National Toxicology Program). 2021. Report on Carcinogens, Fifteenth Edition. Research Triangle Park, NC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. <https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/go/roc15> (EndNote XML)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22427/NTP-OTHER-1003>

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. World Trade Center Health Program. <https://www.cdc.gov/wtc/atag glance.html>

**The American Lung Association in Hawai‘i supports the addition of the registry for all survivors of the Lahaina fires.** This will be in addition to the multi-ethnic cohort study and will keep accurate recording of the people impacted by the fires, even if they don’t participate in the study. The registry is modeled after the registry created after the World Trade Center attack to account for the various people and diseases that developed after that catastrophic event.

We humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805, House Draft 1, for state funding.

With gratitude,

Pedro Haro  
Executive Director  
American Lung Association in Hawai‘i  
[pedro.haro@lung.org](mailto:pedro.haro@lung.org)



# Hawai'i Psychological Association

*For a Healthy Hawai'i*

P.O. Box 833  
Honolulu, HI 96808

[www.hawaii psychology.org](http://www.hawaii psychology.org)

Phone: (808) 521 -8995

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

**March 13, 2024 3:00 P.M. – Rm 225 and via VIDEO CONFERENCE**

The Hawaii Psychological Association testifies in strong support of HB 2805 HD1.

This measure appropriates moneys to the University of Hawai'i to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The full impact of the Maui wildfires and recovery efforts on the mental health of the residents of Maui and the resulting economic and emotional aftermath is still yet to be fully appreciated. Of particular concern is the stress this disaster has had on the capacities of Hawai'i's mental health providers – demand for which is already at crisis-level shortages.

We support very focused effort on determining and studying the mental health and well-being of those communities impacted; and helping us chart a path toward full recovery and prevention.  
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Lichten, Ph.D.  
Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 2:10:16 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dayna Moore	Testifying for Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To:

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 15:00, Conference Room 225

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Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

Aloha, and mahalo for this opportunity to share how the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study can benefit Maui. My name is Dayna Moore. *I am submitting testimony on behalf of Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui which is in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.*** The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I am kānaka maoli and a nurse. I was born and raised on my home island of Maui, where my roots are. Maui is the only home I've known. Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui, which has been involved in crisis response and relief throughout the evolution of Covid-19 and Maui fires relief. Our hui is spearheading numerous grassroots relief efforts, and I've been involved in assisting

Dr. Lorrin Pang of Maui District Health Office in the re-entry process giving PPE, education, and doing mental health screenings for Lāhainā.

Our hui is a Hawai'i based, non-profit bridging community members and leaders in Health Advocacy, Resources, Education, and Support. We contribute to health equity by identifying needs among many populations, including Kānaka Maoli, Asian Pacific Islanders, and underserved segments of the population.

Our mission is to work together with community partners and Hawai'i leadership to educate, advocate, innovate, and take actions to promote health and the well-being of Hawai'i. We actively respond to the fire disaster on Maui by coordinating between subject-matter experts, licensed healthcare professionals, multiple non-profit relief programs, and community-based organizations on Maui, in Hawai'i and from the community.

Advocacy for the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (Maui WES) is supported broadly across the health community. The data collected by the UHERO team and partners can be used by local organizations, healthcare providers, health advocates, leaders, and policy makers.

Dr. Ruben Juarez, Ph.D., Dr. Alikea Maunakea, Ph.D. and Dr. Carl Bonham, Ph.D. of the University of Hawai'i are spearheading this novel Hawai'i study which will inform decision-makers who are directing resources to improve supports and systems that serve our Kānaka Maoli and members of the community. Data can serve as early warning and help alert physicians, healthcare providers, and patients so that treatment and interventions can be provided in a timely way.

This opportunity also allows for participating individuals who have been affected by our Maui fires to be empowered and take an active role in the care of their health. By supporting the expansion of this study to include first responders, volunteers and workers who are exposed in the burn zones, and especially our keiki, we have an opportunity to impact future generations in perpetuity. Our hui supports this work and is actively involved in creating locally sustainable solutions.

Healthcare providers, scientists, and health advocates knowledgeable in wildfire disaster recovery are highly concerned about exposure to toxins from the fires which will impact the long-term health of our community, keiki, and environment. Experts have referred to Maui's post-fire impacts as "The Disaster After the Disaster" and have emphasized that we need to learn the lessons from 9/11, other major urban wildfires, and Red Hill. We are only at the beginning of a long recovery, anticipated to span over approximately 10+ years, and there is already evidence of negative impact to health and mental health for which there is not adequate support.

It is imperative to plan for the long-term now, and dedicate critical funding at this early phase where there is opportunity to directly engage Maui community members from the onset and gather data that can help to inform decision-makers, leaders, and the healthcare community to optimize disaster recovery resources.

Rapid data from the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study has already been made available to the public, and expanding this study will help us measure the scope of immediate and long-term problems which are compounding strain on our fragile Maui, and Hawai'i, healthcare systems which need to be protected. Scientific evidence can assist experts who are recommending preventative measures and risk reduction strategies as a way to mitigate ongoing direct exposure to anyone who is in, around, or near any burn zone for any reason.

Those who are directly and indirectly affected include kānaka maoli, our disabled and disadvantaged, kūpuna, keiki, and anyone who needs and deserves access to safe, comprehensive, and quality healthcare in a timely way. The Maui WES data will inform smart, efficient prevention measures, consistent educational messaging, and active role-modeling of safety, protect public health and help alleviate the burden on our fragile health systems in the long-run.

In conclusion, the groundbreaking research being done has potential to be used as a model nationally, making Hawai'i a leader in effective response to large scale disasters which affects keiki education and well-being, public health, and socioeconomics and creates impacts from trauma, lack of stable housing, and limited access to timely and comprehensive healthcare and mental health support.

***Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui is honored to support the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study and is humbly asking for your support of Maui in the passing of HB 2805 - RELATING TO HEALTH. Our hui is dedicated to helping Maui nei throughout our long-term recovery.***

Mahalo for your time and our hui is sending aloha to all who are impacted by the Maui fires.

Sincerely,

Dayna Moore, BSN, LPN

Director - Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E. Hui

[info@hawaiicommunityhealth.org](mailto:info@hawaiicommunityhealth.org)

Maui, Hawai'i



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA

Department of Economics and UHERO  
Ruben Juarez  
HMSA Distinguished Endowed Professor  
rubenj@hawaii.edu  
Phone: 808-956-7143

March 10, 2024

**Donna Kim, Chair**  
**Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair**  
Senate Committee on Higher Education

**Glenn Wakai, Chair**  
**Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair**  
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

**Re: HB 2805 SD1 – Relating to Health**

Dear Senators Kim, Kidani, Wakai, Elefante, and members of the committees,

I'm the HMSA Professor in Health Economics at the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization (UHERO) and I'm in Strong Support of HB2805. HB2805 will fund the expansion of the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), a multi-ethnic cohort, and the health registry for individuals affected by the wildfire. These two grassroots initiatives are led by UHERO and the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) in partnership with dozens of community organizations. MauiWES stands as the most extensive study to understand and mitigate the health and social impacts of the Maui wildfires. Our study not only provides participants with valuable knowledge about their personal exposure risks (often their first screening since the wildfires) and links them to resources but also contributes vital data to bolster community resilience during recovery. In an unprecedented effort, MauiWES has completed enrolling almost 700 individuals in under a month, gathering a diverse array of social and biomedical samples, including urine, blood, lung, and saliva, and health screenings to evaluate their exposure risk. We hope we can follow these individuals over time to evaluate their risk, but equally important, support our community with data to intervene early before diseases manifest. The scope and speed of this data gathering effort are unmatched in Hawaii's history and could be considered a model of efficiency and thoroughness, akin to what would have been highly desired during other major disasters, such as the September 11 attacks in New York.

As part of the team leading MauiWES, I've had the firsthand privilege of seeing the impact of our work. Our mission goes beyond research; it's about real people and their lives post-disaster. Our preliminary results paint a stark picture and a dire need of survivors. They were published the latest UHERO report in February and include:

- **Social Impacts:** A staggering 65% of participants now reside in temporary housing, with 58% experiencing job loss due to the wildfires. Although over half have found new employment, a significant 24% remain unemployed.
- **Health Outcomes:** Nearly half (49%) report deteriorated health post-wildfires. Alarming, 24% lack consistent medical care access, and 13% are uninsured, a drastic increase from the state's 1.7% uninsured rate last year.
- **Physical Health:** We've identified an elevated cardiovascular disease risk, with 20% presenting high blood pressure and a concerning 74% potentially suffering from respiratory issues.
- **Mental Health:** A pronounced rise in depressive symptoms was noted in 55% of participants, with older residents being particularly affected, signaling the extensive psychological trauma inflicted by the wildfires.

Without the support of HB2805, we face the grim prospect of higher mortality, increased hospitalizations, and a community left in the dark about the risks they face. Funding from HB2805 would enable us to maintain a health registry of individuals exposed, continue our screenings and even expand it to children, and most importantly, offer hope and tangible help to those affected. It's an investment not just in the health of our citizens today but in the resilience of our community for years to come. We have a chance to lead by example, to show how investment in health and knowledge can build a stronger, more informed society. I humbly ask you to **pass HB2805**.

Sincerely,  
**Ruben Juarez, PhD**



TO THE SENATE  
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
NOTICE OF HEARING **HB2805 HD1**

Bill No: HB2805 HD1

Position: **STRONG STUPPORT**

Aloha, Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee Members

I am in Strong Support of HB2805 HD1,. Passage of this measure will establish a registry of those affected by the wildfires to assess their long-term health and well being, and the impacts on communities. Such information provided by this registry will be invaluable asset to the State of Hawai'i, local organizations, and policymakers by enhancing the understanding of the broad and long-term health impacts of 10 wildfires and other natural disasters on the diverse communities of Hawai'i.

Additionally, it is prudent to infer that the demand for psychological services related to the trauma relating to areas such family dynamics, economic hardships, and emotional traumas by the communities affected may increase as time goes on. Furthermore we can expect extensive psychological effects of families losing loved ones. The impact of the Maui Fires will not be fully realized for decades. The long term effect on people's health and the well-being as well as the environment must be identified in order to inform future decisions.

Personally I cannot comprehend what would happen if such a event happened in my community and the impact it would have. Giving the JABSOM the resources and authority to conduct a study will set a positive precedence for any future disasters and give insight on what to expect regarding community impacts.

Therefore, urge you to Pass HB2805 HD1 out of this committee. Voting yes on this measure will reaffirm the legislatures commitment to recognizing the gravity of this initiative and Thank you for taking the time reading this testimony and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Mahalo,

Ken Farm

Chair Emeritus

Neighborhood Board No. 15



## Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814  
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

### COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

### COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Date: March 13, 2024  
From: Hawaii Medical Association  
Beth England MD, Chair- HMA Public Policy Committee

## **RE HB 2805 HD1 Relating to Health**

### **Position: Support**

This measure would appropriate moneys for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires, and declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025.

The Maui Wildfire Exposure Cohort Study (MauiWES) addresses a critical gap in knowledge about the effects of environmental hazards and socioeconomic challenges on the health of those affected by the wildfires. The data that includes biospecimens from over 1000 residents impacted by the wildfires will provide vital insights into the short- and long-term health outcomes such as chronic diseases, mental health issues, and the broader social implications.

Beyond the immediate analysis to address the current crisis, the study will inform preventative strategies and improve future disaster response, prioritizing health and well-being in the wake of natural disasters. We urge our lawmakers to support this study for a strong Maui recovery as well as Hawaii crisis mitigation and management in the future.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify on this issue.

#### **2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers**

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#### **2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team**

Beth England, MD, Chair  
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director



March 11, 2024

To: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY INTERGOVERNMENTAL MILITARY AFFAIRS  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Hrg: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 3:00PM

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 400 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a health registry. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT of HB 2805 HD1 RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler  
Executive Director



#### HIPHI Board

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For Children in Hawai'i

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HMSA

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John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Native Hawaiian Research Office

#### HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free  
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &  
Community Living

Public Health Workforce  
Development

Date: March 11, 2024

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Higher Education

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Bradon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Public Safety &  
Intergovernmental Affairs

Re: Support for HB2805 HD1 Relating to Health

Mtg: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 3:00 PM

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) **supports HB2805 HD1**. This bill would appropriate funding for University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study in relation to the 2023 Maui fires.

The impact of the Maui Fires will not be fully realized for decades. The long term effect on people's health and the well-being as well as the environment must be identified in order to inform future decisions.

This bill will help to fund the continued Maui Wildfire Exposure Cohort Study, which is a comprehensive study to understand and mitigate the health and social impacts fo the Maui wildfires. The project is collaborative effort to monitor health and well-being and to identify steps to achieve resiliency during the long recovery process.

The extent of the fires' impact on chronic disease, mental health, as well as land and water are yet unkown. Furthermore, the socioeconomic outcomes are not fully understood. By studying these impacts, we will better be able to inform future healthcare needs, community decisions, policies, and potential diseasters.

The total effects of the Maui Fires are still incomprehensible. It is integral for our state to gain an understanding of steps forward to aid in recovery as well as to plan for the future.

Thank you for considering this important measure that will inform decisions for many years and for allowing us to present this testimony in **support of HB2805 HD1**.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Peggy Mierzwa'.

Peggy Mierzwa  
Director of Policy & Advocacy  
Hawaii Public Health Institute

---

<sup>i</sup> Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.



[fightcancer.org](http://fightcancer.org)

Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024

**ACS CAN SUPPORTS HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.**

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawaii Guam  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity in STRONG **SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH which appropriates moneys for the University of Hawaii to conduct a multiethnic cohort study and registry regarding the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society advocates for public policies that reduce death and suffering from cancer. ACS CAN works with federal, state, and local government bodies to support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

Data collection is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities that might result from the 2023 Maui wildfires. The University of Hawaii Cancer Center provides important cancer research, access to life-saving treatment including clinical trials which play a critical role in reducing the cancer burden for communities in the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT on this important matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at 808.460.6109, or [Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org](mailto:Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org).



## 'Ahahui o nā Kauka

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 1015

Honolulu HI 96813

Phone 808.548.0270

E-mail [huikauka@gmail.com](mailto:huikauka@gmail.com)

### 2023-2024 Advocacy Committee

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March 11, 2024

### COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

### COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

### Group Testimony in support of HB2805HD1 RELATING TO HEALTH

'Ahahui o nā Kauka is an organization of Native Hawaiian physicians dedicated to the health of the people of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians in particular. Several of our hui members volunteered for the medical relief efforts after the Maui wildfires, experiencing first-hand the immediate devastation as well as the emerging effects on the physical, mentally, and social determinants of health. We support the appropriation of moneys to the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In our continued dedication to the people we serve, we believe the data from this study will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 5:14:53 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Smith-Johnson	Testifying for Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:



Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The work we have done of the ground informs our support of this bill and its efforts. The impact that the fires have had on mother, birthing people and babies in particular is something that deserves attention and study.

WE humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii



## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

### Testimony to the Senate Committees on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs & Higher Education

**HB2805 HD1, Relating to Health**  
**Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 3:00pm**

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Aloha Chairs Wakai and Mercado Kim, Vice Chairs Elefante and Kidani, and members of the committees.

I write in strong support of HB2805 HD1, relating to health. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

The critical information found through the multiethnic cohort study will provide government agencies and community based non-profit organizations with valuable data to inform their long-term state-wide response to those directly and indirectly impacted.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Mahalo,



Bryan L. Talisayan  
Executive Director

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 1:48:51 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara De Lucca	Testifying for Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Barbara De Lucca, President of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawai‘i, and we are in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The research conducted through HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH, which includes the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), is crucial for the Hispanic community in Hawai‘i for several reasons:

1. **Health Equity:** The study aims to understand the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires on a diverse group of individuals, including the Hispanic community. By examining how different populations have been impacted, it can shed light on potential health disparities and inequities that may exist, allowing for targeted interventions to address these issues.
2. **Community Well-Being:** Wildfires can have far-reaching consequences on the well-being of affected communities, including physical and mental health. Understanding these effects is vital for providing appropriate support and resources to the Hispanic community and ensuring their recovery.
3. **Future Preparedness:** The insights gained from this research can inform future disaster preparedness and response strategies. This knowledge is particularly important for minority communities like the Hispanic population, as they may face unique challenges and vulnerabilities during disasters.
4. **Inclusive Policy:** Research outcomes can lead to the development of more inclusive and effective policies that consider the specific needs and concerns of the Hispanic community in Hawai‘i. This can result in better healthcare access, disaster preparedness, and recovery support tailored to their requirements.

In summary, this research is essential for the Hispanic community in Hawai'i to promote health equity, enhance community resilience, and ensure that their unique needs and challenges are recognized and addressed in disaster-related policies and interventions.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Barbara De Lucca, President

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawaii

**RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.**

To:

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

Hrg: Wednesday, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 15:00, Conference Room 225

Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

My name is Genesis Gil and I am in STRONG **SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The Maui Wildfire Exposure Study has had a significant impact on the residents of Maui affected by the August 2023 wildfires. The provision of preliminary results indicating levels of exposure highlights the importance of such studies in assessing the health impacts of environmental disasters like wildfires. By notifying participants to seek medical attention, the study is taking proactive steps to ensure that individuals receive the necessary care and support in addressing potential health issues arising from the wildfires. This underscores the importance of ongoing research and support services for our community.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Genesis Gil

Haiku, 96708

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 5:36:23 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nikima Glatt	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Nikima Glatt. I am a mother of student who attends Lahainaluna highschool right above the burn zone.

I am also a nurse practitioner who lives and works in Lahaina.

I have been helping serve the medical needs of our community in Lahaina since the day of the fires and still up to this day. I am still seeing patients, I am still treating my community and I have stepped away from my own practice to do so because Lahaina is still struggling. We are still struggling.

I am the current medical director of the Maui Medic Healers Hui And I am Co-investigator on the MauiWES study with Dr. Juarez and Dr. Maunakea.

I want to first talk about the cost to myself, the costs I know I have had to bear, that no one else can or will bear for me. Not because I expect that anyone cares or will help me, but as a representative of what our communities have also lost through the wildfires on Maui. How do you quantify this? The costs are NEVER less than you can imagine, they are ALWAYS more. How would you propose that I can be made whole? How can the members of my community be made whole?

I lost a year of life with my son, what price do you put on that? He was temporarily displaced through the past 7 months. His friends have all lost their homes, they have either all left island, or have been transferred to different schools. He asked me "what are we staying here for, There is nothing left." What would you tell your child? What is the right response?

In August, shortly before the fires, I was enrolled in a Master's program in Public Health so I could start to move out of direct patient care and into the educational aspects of public health and illness management and prevention. But here i am, still providing direct care, and having to defer my education, why, because no one else was there to provide that care in our area. I lost a year of school in public health master's program, what price do you put on that?

I was immediately and then repeatedly traumatized in Lahaina. What price do you put on that?

I lost my sense of safety and security, as I gave up my personal space, my days and nights, my cell phone number, my vehicle, and my apartment in service of the needs of my community. Should I be keeping tabs? How do I quantify all of that? What price do you put on it?

I was repeatedly assaulted, and I lost my peace and my peace of mind. I had to sleep with a machete under my pillow or in my car in the first few weeks after. What price do you put on that? In what world is this normal or acceptable? This is how we lived without access or the ability to even call 911 in an emergency.

I lost access to health care, to healthy food, to public and my every day outdoor spaces to exercise and be healthy. What price do you put on that?

I lost my health. All new as of the last 6 months, I have been hospitalized 4 times now, once since my last testimony. I have lung lesions, heavy metal exposure and toxicities, i had an elevated lead level, i have pre-hypertension, I have had svt and other cardiac related issues due to stress and toxicities, I have a complex mass on my kidney, I have a distended gallbladder, an inflamed liver, wounds from my assault that I could not contact 911 for help with in the beginning. I'm exhausted physically and emotionally. I'm tired. I used to jog and trail run every day, I used to skate with my son every day. Both areas have since burned to the ground. How do you quantify or put a cost on the quality of your health aside from the bills that are further pushing us into debt making people lean towards moving and filing bankruptcy?

I lost my ability to work, I had to quit two jobs, I had to help people in the community because no one else could and there were no other providers in our area full time helping out for longer than a few hours at a time.

I am racking up extensive credit card debt, living on credit, unable to work but also working to take care of the community. I'll have to file bankruptcy and wont be able to buy a car or a house for years. How will this get paid? I am feeling so sick, I'm worried I can't afford to take anymore time to even heal.

I lost my energy, I am constantly fatigued, I am unwell and feel so sick every day, I feel like ive received a death sentence but instead of being put down mercifully, I'm being executed over the course of these six months and whatever years to come that I will survive. It is not a question of if my life expectancy is impacted; it is and will be, by at the very least 2.5 years, but likely much more. The only question is to what degree, and to what level can my remaining life be made whole and worthwhile. What price do you put on life?

While I have lost a lot, including years of healthy life, I have gained a mission and my voice as a representative of the people. Im not paid to represent Lahaina. I am not native Hawaiian, I am not kanaka, and I am not the best representative of the people in Lahaina. It's not my JOB to represent them. But I dont see their needs and wants represented otherwise, so I feel compelled to speak. I feel compelled to help and support this research, because I know first hand this is the only time and the first time our community has felt like they matter. This research is the first time they've been shown compassion and have been able to get a simple physical examination since the fires! How is that acceptable?

My losses are substantial, and yet I am privileged; there are so many who don't have the safety net to survive this, and the means that I have to serve the community.

You can't prevent what has been lost. Is there anything that can be salvaged, that can be gained?

I've gained my voice, I've gained purpose. But I am just one person. People are languishing with no visible gains, and no hope for the future, no path to health or recovery, the dreams they may have had for their lives are dashed and gone. Do we have responsibility for each other, or are we an island of isolated individuals, all out for themselves? Because for the first two weeks after the fires I can tell you that **WE WERE ALONE TO FEND FOR OURSELVES**. It took **TWO WEEKS** for any of our representatives to show up. The first representative to show up and brought us a carry-on luggage full of spam from Oahu. That is what we were given by our representatives after two weeks of exposure, we could have used bandages for our burn victims. Spam, while watching our loved ones die, our town and homes burned to ground, our lives gone, sleeping with weapons under our pillows and hypervigilant to any sound alarm, unable to call 911, traumatized, hopeless, and left to feel like we were forgotten. We had to take care of each other and we felt abandoned.

Are we a collection of individuals, or a community? Are we a web of strangers, or an actual society?

People's entire lives are derailed. We may not be able to help people achieve the dreams they once held for themselves their children their friends and grandchildren. But can we at least not make them healthy and whole? If we are not responsible for the health and safety of our neighbors, what higher priority of government can you point to?

I hear and see a lot of so-called leaders quite satisfied, even proud, of the way they've operated since the fires. But I'm here to tell you we have not fully seen that leadership. The leadership wasn't there during the fire. The leadership is not there in the aftermath. We didn't see leadership and support we've needed, and we still haven't. Supporting this bill is a chance to show leadership and to prove that you represent us and that you support us. When I see legislative inaction, what I worry about is that people are feeling wildfire fatigue; you've heard this before and nothing I say can reach you. Imagine my fatigue, imagine our fatigue in Lahaina; imagine the fatigue of the people who live in Lahaina. We are still suffering. We are not ok.

We want to be made whole, we want our lives back, but we are exhausted after still fighting 7 months later. But what we deserve, and the only thing that we will accept, is the commitment from our representatives to catalog the damage done to our lives, and to provide the means for us to understand what happened and what is coming. It is the least we deserve. Our lives have already been cut short.

We need funding to expand this bill to include everyone impacted. We need to understand why we feel so sick already. We need to know not only for us, but for our children. My son goes to Lahainaluna. Will I see him graduate? What kind of future does he have before him? I am terrified. We are all afraid about our futures. This bill gives us hope and this research gives us a chance. It will provide us with direction and resources. It already has helped so many and we hear this at every event. Participants' most common statement is "wow, I haven't had this much

information about my health so quickly in years!" Many people cry. Many have already needed higher levels of care.

This research and this bill is a chance to at least understand what is going on and what we can do, and how we can better mitigate our own health and our own futures. We need this more than anything right now and our community deserves better. Please help Lahaina and Upcountry by supporting this bill. We need this.



**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/8/2024 8:26:13 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Blackwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 15:00, Conference Room 225

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Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

My name is Amy Michele Blackwell and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Include a few sentences about why this research is important to you.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Amy Michele Blackwell

Honolulu, 96825

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 11:48:13 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Binh Le	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

My name is Binh Le and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Many people in Lahaina city, Maui are needed your supports. In the first survey of the Maui survey, we learn that people are suffering from the lack of food, housing, finance. The Maui wildfire has affected their life by differnt ways wither emotional and/or physical aspects.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Binh

Honolulu, Hawaii 96848

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 1:25:48 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth Hayashida, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee,

This written testimony is to encourage your **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – a bill for an act relating to health, written to support the University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. This study provides the government of the State of Hawai‘i, Maui County leadership, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness. This study's early findings are already benefiting the tens of thousands of people of Maui impacted by the August fire complex that leveled over 2500 buildings in Lahaina, displaced thousands of residents, and has impacted the health and well-being of the people of Maui, Hawai‘i, and across the Pacific Rim.

My direct family relations on Maui include five generations of our family, presence since the 1800's, and presence in Lahaina for nearly 100 years. I am deeply concerned about the short, medium, and long-term health impact of this incident to the health and well-being of the population impacted by the fire. This study and other similar studies must be funded in order to assist Hawaii's public health system, health care financing system, and health care providers to better estimate immediate and long-term health care services needed to restore the health and well-being of the tens of thousands of people impacted, including my own family members, cousins, relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Immediate action on this bill is urgently needed as part of the disaster recovery and response in order to aid decision making in 2024 and beyond. Thank you for your rapid work to agenda, consider, and support these needs.

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 1:50:24 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniela Bond-Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Wakai and Kim, Vice Chairs Elefante and Kidani, and Members of the Committee

I wish to express my strong support for HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a health registry. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Based on my professional experience as a data scientist at the University of Hawaii at Manoa working on health research, I can assure you that this project is essential. There is no alternative data that could be used to comprehensively monitor and analyze the health impact of the Maui wildfires. This data will make it possible to not only assess the short and long-term impacts for the study cohort, but statistical methods can be used with the proposed study design to derive results that are representative of the health impact of the Maui wildfires for entire population of affected survivors. The study also does an exceptional job in working with community representatives to ensure that community priorities are honored.

I hereby ask for your support and allocation of state funding for HB2805 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration

Dr. Daniela Bond-Smith

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 6:11:45 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB2805 HD1 that would support the UH Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. The results of the study would help legislators and others with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I submit this testimony in support of the Maui community as a means to empower their voices through informed facts as they seek solutions to recovery of their health and overall wellbeing.

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 6:53:36 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jonas Yee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

My name is Jonas Yee and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

This research is important to understand the potential effects of future wildfires, disasters and human health in general.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Mahalo,

Jonas Yee

Kailua Hawaii 96734

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 8:11:04 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marsha Lowery ND	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

My name is Dr. Marsha Lowery and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

Currently, UH is the only entity in the state looking at our communities health. I have volunteered at many of their events and the data that is being gathered is crucial now and in the future. Additional funding will allow UH to expand to anyone who wants to participate.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marsha Lowery



**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:17:50 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexis K Maunakea K Stang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ke kako'o nei au keia pila no ka mea he mea nui no kakou Ola no kakou olakino no na kanaka apau!

To:

**Senator Glenn Wakai**, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

**Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante**, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

**Senator Donna Mercado Kim**, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

**Senator Michelle N. Kidani**, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Hrg: Wednesday, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 15:00, Conference Room 225

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Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim and Kidani,

My name is Julie Meier and I am in STRONG **SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

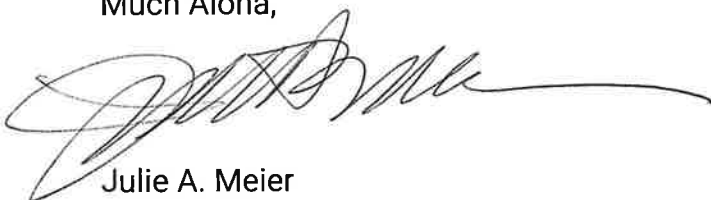
This bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The effects of the wildfires on the community's health will be on-going for years to come. We have an obligation to those affected and the unknown affect on future generations.

I am the current chairperson for the American Lung Association in Hawaii's Womens Cabinet. It is a volunteer position and I serve because "if you can't breathe...nothing else matters".

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT to pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding. We owe it to those who have survived the wildfires.

Much Aloha,



Julie A. Meier

Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

TO: Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, March 13, 2024  
TIME: 3:00 PM  
PLACE: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2805, HD1RELATING TO HEALTH**

Dear Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committees,

My name is Cynthia J. Goto, and I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2805, HD1 relating to health. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Environmental Health states that public health disaster studies help identify associations between disaster-related exposures and mortality or morbidity. Understanding the adverse health effects of disasters provides situational awareness and provides timely and accurate health information for decision-makers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Cynthia J. Goto

Date: March 11, 2024

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & INTERGOVERNMENTAL &  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & INTERGOVERNMENTAL &  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

Members of the Committees

Subject: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 — Relating to Health

My name is Carl Bonham, I am the Executive Director of UHERO, and a Professor of Economics at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the College of Social Sciences, I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 2805 Relating to Health. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i.

I strongly support HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This bill supports collaboration between UHERO, the College of Social Sciences Health Policy Initiative, and the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the UH Cancer Center, and numerous community-based organizations to conduct a comprehensive study of health and social impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires. The study will establish a registry of individuals impacted by the wildfires, enabling a thorough assessment of the long-term health and well-being effects on these communities.

This collaboration will provide invaluable information for the State of Hawaii, local organizations, and future policymakers. It will deliver crucial health information to both study participants and those addressing immediate community needs, including community organizations and policy makers. Beyond an examination of environmental exposures, the study concentrates on the health and well-being of those deeply affected individuals. The data and insights derived from this research will not only deepen our understanding of the long-term consequences of wildfires but will also contribute to more effective policies and strategies to mitigate the impact of future disasters.

State support for MauiWES, will extend the study's viability beyond our initial funding from the Hawaii Community foundation. We have also applied for a competitive federal grant from the National Institutes of Health, and will need support from all parties to make this work a success. This study continues UHERO's long-standing tradition of public-private partnerships to support research of critical practical significance to the people of Hawaii.

With over twenty-five years of economic and policy research, UHERO has developed a comprehensive and robust data infrastructure. Our public facing data portals and dashboards cover a wide range of topics, and serves as a valuable resource for policymakers and the community daily. Similarly, the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) has successfully established the Hawai'i All-Payer Claims Database, positioning it as the primary data center in collaboration with various state entities such as the Department of Health, Office of Enterprise Services, and Medicaid (Med-QUEST). The combined efforts of UHERO and SSRI's robust infrastructure will be invaluable for informing and guiding disaster recovery efforts, offering insights and data-driven solutions to aid in the rebuilding process.

MauiWES is a collaborative effort, drawing upon the support and expertise of numerous community partners who have been unwavering in their commitment since the outbreak of the wildfires. By supporting this initiative, the legislature can demonstrate its unwavering dedication to the well-being of its constituents and the resilience of the Maui community, ultimately ensuring a faster and more efficient recovery for everyone involved.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH to secure state funding for this pivotal research partnership.

Sincerely,

Carl Bonham

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:31:11 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Troy Siruno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 15:00, Conference Room 225

Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, and Kidani,

My name is Troy Siruno and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

So many of us have friends or family who were directly affected by the wildfires. We owe it to them to not only learn as much as we can about the short- and long-term effects of the fires on people's health, but to also share that information with those in the registry to help reduce or avoid any negative health impacts.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Troy Siruno  
Honolulu, HI 96816



**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 8:41:30 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl oncea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Cheryl Onea and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Onea

1544 Kalaniewai Place Honolulu 96821

808 342 2515

To:

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 15:00, Conference Room 225

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Senators Wakai, Elefante, Kim, Kidani,

My name is Nathalia Cardenas-Haro and I am in STRONG **SUPPORT** of HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires and a registry of people affected by the Maui Wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I was born and raised in Lahaina with my family having immigrated over 30 years ago from Mexico. We are now three generations and had to be displaced to Oahu due to the fires. I still have family who remained over there and this bill would ease our worries about the effects this disaster could bring us.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 HD1 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Nathalia Cardenas-Haro

Honolulu, 96817





**LATE**

**HB-2805-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 11:25:19 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/13/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jerry Livaudais	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

It has been my privilege to serve the Lahaina community as the Deputy Maui District Health Office for the Hawaii Department of Health since the day after the fire. Starting then, I've had continuous, first hand experience with the community, the disaster response and recovery from the clinical and behavioral health points of view.

The Maui Wildlife Exposure Study is unique in evaluating the health and behavioral consequences of an unprecedented urban fire. The study examines the unique combination of exposures to what is likely toxic ash, and the protracted housing challenge. The exposures create a hazard whose health effects are partially visible now, but not fully appreciated nor predictable in future years. The uniqueness of this study is also in the diversity of our local population. All in all this study is poised to create new knowledge about the long term physical and behavioral health effects of urban fires AND at the same time, help connect a displaced survivor population with medical care while creating space for processing their shared trauma.

I am hopeful that our legislators will see enough value in both the knowledge gained and the service to the Lahaina community provided to fund this study - and hopefully see it expand to include children.

Sincerely,

Jerry Livaudais, MD, MPH