

TESTIMONY OF
LEODOLOFF R. ASUNCION, JR.
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF HAWAII

TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
WATER AND LAND

March 12, 2024
9:00 a.m.

Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

MEASURE: S.B. No. 2842 SD2

TITLE: RELATING TO WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION.

DESCRIPTION: Establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to advise and make recommendations to state agencies concerning the State's wildfire safety and prevention efforts. Makes an appropriation. Declares that the appropriation exceeds the general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

POSITION:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") offers the following comments for consideration.

COMMENTS:

The Commission appreciates the intent of this measure to establish a Wildfire Safety Mitigation Working Group ("Working Group") that would advise and make recommendations to state agencies on issues concerning the State's wildfire safety and prevention efforts. The Commission appreciates the Senate Committee on Ways and Means' inclusion of the Commission's proposed amendments reflected in the SD2 of this measure.

The Working Group's advice and recommendations on the role of electric utilities in wildfire safety and mitigation will significantly enhance the Commission's ability to develop and review wildfire mitigation plans, assuming legislation that would require the

Commission to review and approve such plans is adopted (referenced in the SD2 as §269-).

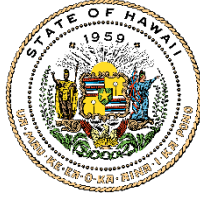
Regarding Working Group membership as contemplated in the SD2 of this measure, the Commission further recommends members also include industry experts, academics, and persons with labor and workforce safety experience or other relevant qualifications and who represent a cross-section of relevant expertise including, members experienced in the safe operation, design, and engineering of electrical infrastructure.

The Commission suggests removal of the 2050 effective date and believes this bill should become effective on passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

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 AND LAND

Tuesday, March 12, 2024
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2842 SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

Senate Bill 2842 Senate Draft 2 establishes the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to advise and make recommendations to state agencies concerning the State's wildfire safety and prevention efforts. **The Department provides comments on the bill, recommending the bill be merged with Senate Bill 2142 as written in the attached draft. The Department is supportive of the attached merged draft so long as it does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive FY 2025 Supplemental Budget Request.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

S.B. NO.2X42

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State recognizes
2 the increasing threat of wildfires to our communities, natural
3 resources, and economy, and that the State is committed to
4 proactively addressing this growing challenge through a
5 comprehensive and collaborative approach. Understanding the need
6 for a multifaceted strategy, the legislature further finds that
7 a working group comprised of government agencies, fire experts,
8 landowners, and stakeholders is required to find solutions that
9 address the State's wildfire preparedness and mitigation
10 challenges and increase the State's wildfire preparedness and
11 mitigation practices.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
13 wildfire mitigation working group.

14 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a wildfire mitigation
15 working group to develop a state wildfire mitigation plan and to
16 advise and make recommendations to state agencies concerning the
17 state's wildfire safety and prevention efforts.

18 (b) The working group shall consist of the following

S.B. NO.2X42

1 members:

2 (1) The chairperson of the board of land and natural
3 resources, or the chairperson's designee, who shall
4 serve as co-chair of the working group.

5 (2) The chairperson of the state fire council, or the
6 chairperson's designee, who shall serve as co-chair of
7 the working group.

8 (3) The director of the Hawaii emergency management
9 agency or the director's designee;

10 (4) The director of the office of planning and
11 sustainable development or the director's designee;

12 (5) The director of transportation or their designee;

13 (6) The director of taxation or their designee;

14 (7) A representative of the ranching industry, to be
15 invited by the chairperson of the state fire council;

16 (8) One member who shall be appointed by the president of
17 the senate;

18 (9) One member who shall be appointed by the speaker of
19 the house of representatives; and

20 (10) A representative of a Hawaii wildfire management
21 organization, to be invited by the chairperson of the
22 State fire council.

S.B. NO.2X42

- 1 (c) The state wildfire mitigation plan shall:
- 2 (1) Identify and map wildfire susceptibility and
- 3 vulnerability to determine which communities,
- 4 landscapes, buildings, and infrastructure are most
- 5 vulnerable to future wildfires
- 6 (2) Identify tax incentives and develop recommendations for
- 7 a competitive grant funding opportunity to reduce fire
- 8 risk and support fuels management on private lands.
- 9 (3) Develop and make recommendation for a system of
- 10 monetary support for managing public land to reduce fire
- 11 risk;
- 12 (4) Review the emergency resources that are available in
- 13 the State to be deployed to address fires; and
- 14 (5) Advise and make recommendations to state agencies
- 15 concerning the state's wildfire safety, prevention, and
- 16 mitigation efforts.
- 17 (c) No member of the working group shall be subject to
- 18 chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of
- 19 that member's participation on the working group.
- 20 (d) The working group shall be dissolved on December 31,
- 21 2026.

S.B. NO.2X42

1 SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of
2 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,
3 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the
4 appropriations contained in Act 164, Regular Session of 2023,
5 and this Act will cause the state general fund expenditure
6 ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by
7 \$ or per cent. This current declaration takes
8 into account general fund appropriations authorized for fiscal
9 year 2024-2025 in Act 164, Regular Session of 2023, and this Act
10 only. The reasons for exceeding the general fund expenditure
11 ceiling are that:

- 12 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to
13 serve the public interest; and
- 14 (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs
15 addressed by this Act.

16 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general revenues
17 of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for
19 the administrative expenses of the wildfire mitigation working
20 group established by section 2 of this Act including the
21 establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
22 administrative staff position.

S.B. NO.2X42

1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
2 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

4

5

INTRODUCED BY: _____

6

S.B. NO. 2X42

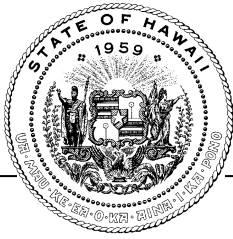
Report Title:

Wildfire Mitigation Working Group; Report; Expenditure Ceiling; Appropriation (\$)

Description:

Establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group to advise and make recommendations to state agencies concerning the State's wildfire safety and prevention efforts.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
INTERIM DIRECTOR

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Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Interim Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 430

in consideration of
BILL NO SB 2842, SD2
RELATING TO WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** Senate Bill 2842, S.D. 2 which establishes a wildfire mitigation working group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to advise and make recommendations to state agencies concerning the State's wildfire safety and prevention efforts.

OPSD considers efforts to prevent and mitigate the effects of future wildfires as imperative for the state of Hawaii. The creation of a wildfire mitigation working group can develop a state wildfire mitigation plan and make recommendations to state agencies to reduce wildfire risk. OPSD is appreciative of the changes made in the new drafts of this bill, which consolidates potentially overlapping pieces of legislation. The revised draft improves coordination and alignment to prevent duplication of effort and overlapping responsibilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on 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

March 8, 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: Senate Bill (SB) 2842, Senate Draft (SD) 2, Relating to Wildfire Safety and Prevention

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC supports SB 2842, SD2, which establishes the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to advise and make recommendations to state agencies concerning the State's wildfire safety and prevention efforts.

Wildfires are a serious threat to Hawaii's native ecosystems and wildland urban interface areas. 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 SFC recommends that the SFC Chair be allowed to designate a representative in their place as co-chair of the proposed advisory board, as fire chief duties are already extensive and may not permit full attention by the SFC Chair. The SFC supports SB 2842, SD2, to help assess and mitigate Hawaii's wildfire risks.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

KAZUO TODD
Chair

KT/GL:



Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy
Suite A-143A, #249
Honolulu, HI 96825
Phone: 808/933/9411
Email: hfia@hawaiiforest.org

Date: 03/09/24

TO: WAL Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe and WAL Committee Members Chun, Ganaden, Hashem, Mizuno, Morikawa, Takayama, Souza

FROM: Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB2842 SD2 Relating to Wildfire Safety and Prevention

Dear Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe and WAL Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support SB2842 SD2 Relating to Wildfire Safety and Prevention.

While we certainly hope that a disaster such as the wildfires of 2023 in Lahaina do not strike again, we understand that with ever increasing global emissions, warming climate trends, windy and dry conditions, and vast expanses of pyrophytic weeds and grasses surrounding our communities and covering concerningly sizeable swaths of our islands, it is inevitable that we will face future fires. The HFIA believes that establishing a wildfire mitigation working group will be beneficial to the people, infrastructures, the economy and natural resources of Hawaii and help us to minimize the frequency and severity of future wildfires.

We hope that you will support SB2842 SD2.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Guy Cellier

Guy Cellier, President
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: President Guy Cellier, Vice President Irene Sprecher, Secretary Taylor Coons, Treasurer Wade Lee
Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Aaron Hammer, Nicholas Koch, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

MARCH 12, 2024

SB 2842, SD2, RELATING TO WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** SB 2842, SD2, relating to wildfire safety and prevention. 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 long-term planning and interagency coordination to 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



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the House Committee on
Water and Land

In Consideration of Senate Bill No. SB2842 SD2
RELATING TO WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe and the honorable members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization that was initially formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and re-energized last year after the devastating Lahaina fires on August 8. Lahaina Strong has been at the forefront of relief and advocacy efforts, including initiating the "Fishing for Housing" camp, which has been in operation for over 17 weeks along Kaanapali Beach, highlighting the need for dignified housing for Lahaina fire victims. Our organization is the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 20,000 supporters, engaged in emphasizing the importance of local voices and community-driven solutions.

Lahaina Strong stands in support of SB2842 SD2 for the establishment of the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group. The devastating Lahaina wildfire on August 8th serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need to address the escalating threat of wildfires in our state. The destruction wrought by this wildfire underscores the critical importance of proactive and collaborative action to mitigate the risks posed by wildfires.

If it happened to Lahaina, it could happen anywhere. The increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires in recent years highlight the pressing need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to wildfire preparedness and mitigation. The establishment of the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group represents a significant step forward in addressing this growing challenge. By bringing together stakeholders from government agencies, fire experts, landowners, and relevant industries, the working group will be uniquely positioned to develop effective strategies to reduce the risk of wildfires and

protect our communities and natural resources so what happened to Lahaina won't happen to other communities across the state.

Lahaina Strong would like to propose an additional recommendation for consideration by the committee. Given the historical and cultural significance of our land, we recommend that at least one member of the working group be a cultural advisor. This individual would bring a valuable historical viewpoint to the discussions, offering insights into traditional land management practices and how they can integrate into modern wildfire mitigation efforts. By incorporating traditional Hawaiian perspectives, we can honor the cultural significance of our islands while also enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of our wildfire mitigation strategies

In conclusion, Lahaina Strong **supports SB2842 SD2**, recognizing it as a vital initiative to enhance our state's wildfire preparedness and ensure the safety and well-being of our residents. Let us honor the memory of those affected by the Lahaina wildfire by taking decisive action to prevent such tragedies from occurring again.

Mahalo for your attention and commitment to the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

Jordan Ruidas, Courtney Lazo, Pa'ele Kiakona

Lahaina Strong



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 430
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 AT 9:00 A.M.

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

SUPPORT SB2842 SD2 RELATING TO THE WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB2842 SD2.**

The Chamber supports the intent of this bill and, coming from Maui, we truly appreciate all of the efforts to help our island and the rest of our state given the lessons learned from the August 8 wildfires. However, we see a lot of overlap in proposed bills (bills on funding equipment and creating numerous boards and workgroups (SB2808, SB2356, SB2842, SB2143, etc.). There are many ideas addressing the same/similar solutions. Some appear to overlap in personnel and equipment and other ideas may just need to be integrated into a comprehensive program. While we appreciate the intent of all wildfire-related bills, we are hoping they can be integrated into a more cohesive and comprehensive plan to avoid duplication and overspending and get the best return on our investment, given that taxpayers will be expected to pay more for these new investments.

Senate Bill 2356 (Establishes within the Department of Defense the position and duties of State Wildfire Marshal, the position and duties of State Wildfire Chief, the State Wildfire Corps, and the State Wildfire Fuel Reduction Task Force) is a bill that could encompass the cohesive and comprehensive plan. We believe elements of SB2842 could be included in the State Wildfire Fuel Reduction Task Force, like having 3 economists in the group. Additionally, we would like to see each islands' major Chamber of Commerce included in the group as well as 2 members from the business sector.

For these reasons we **support SB2842 SD2**, but **request that the House consider our comments on consolidation of bills into a comprehensive and coordinated plan.**

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

SB-2842-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 2:08:50 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/12/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to establishing the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to advise and make recommendations to state agencies concerning the State's wildfire safety and prevention efforts.

Makes an appropriation. Declares that the appropriation exceeds the general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025.

SB-2842-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 9:24:13 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/12/2024 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in strong support of SB2842. I lived through the West Maui wildfires of 2023 and it is essential that this be prioritized. We have had an especially rainy winter while providing much needed rain, it also creates a much bigger fuel load for the upcoming dry months and if not mitigated could create disaster stacked upon disaster, this is the case in some other jurisdictions across America and has led to no further projects being pursued due to awaiting FEMA reimbursement and working to clean up disaster after disaster. Prevention is a better path to pursue.

Mahalo for your service and commitment to our communities,

Tamara Paltin

SB-2842-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:03:26 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/12/2024 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express support for S.B. NO. 2842 SD2, which aims to establish a wildfire mitigation working group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources. As a resident of Lahaina who has witnessed the devastating effects of wildfires on our community, I believe that this bill is a crucial step towards addressing the urgent threat of wildfires and protecting our homes, families, and natural environment.

Watching our beloved town of Lahaina go up in flames and witnessing the suffering of our people in the aftermath of the wildfire was a heartbreaking experience that will stay with me forever. The destruction caused by wildfires goes beyond property damage; it tears apart the fabric of our community, displaces families, and leaves scars that may never fully heal.

The establishment of a wildfire mitigation working group, as outlined in S.B. NO. 2842 SD2, is a necessary response to the increasing threat of wildfires in our state. By bringing together experts, stakeholders, and community members, this working group can develop comprehensive strategies to mitigate the risk of wildfires and enhance our preparedness and resilience.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Riley Bond

SB-2842-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 6:49:38 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/12/2024 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair PoePoe, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am a Lahaina resident. I am writing in support of SB2842 with comments. Kala mai for my late testimony; as you know, it can be difficult to follow each of the bills that we care so deeply about.

Our State's preparedness for wildfire disasters is nowhere near where it needs to be. While I support the idea of this bill, it could use some work.

Back in November when the House Working Groups met to discuss various issues after the fire, my mentor Lieutenant George Purdy testified with some significant suggestions. He works for the Airport Fire Crew on Lana'i, and will not fight fires without his drones. They have not had a serious fire since he began implementation of this practice, and he has even been able to catch arsonists because of them. Drones are unmanned aircraft, meaning that they can fly in winds that our helicopters cannot. I hope someone revisits Lt. Purdy's November testimony and conversations that emerged from the working group. He has also been encouraging HIEMA to implement unified command protocols since back in September.

I also believe that the proposed Board needs more fire professionals. I would love to see leadership from our fire services on each island be included in this working group. They have the ability to see things in a way that the proposed Board simply would not.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jackie Keefe