

**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1949, RELATING TO THE GENERATION OF WILDFIRE SUSCEPTIBILITY MAPS FOR HAWAII.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND AND ON
HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

DATE: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309 and Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chairs Ichiyama and Perruso and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill: (1) requires the University of Hawai'i to establish and report on a two-year program to generate web-GIS wildfire susceptibility and vulnerability maps for the State to determine which communities, landscapes, buildings, and infrastructure are most vulnerable to future wildfires; and (2) makes an appropriation for purposes of the Act.

Article X, section 6, of the Hawai'i Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "This section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." If the Committee decides to pass this bill, we recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water & Land
House Committee of Higher Education & Technology
Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Brennon Morioka, Dean
College of Engineering

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1949 – RELATING TO THE GENERATION OF WILDFIRE SUSCEPTIBILITY MAPS FOR HAWAII

Chairs Ichiyama and Perruso, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Kapela, and members of the Water & Land and Higher Education & Technology Committees:

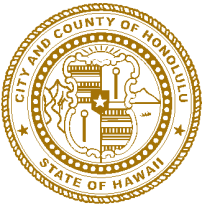
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1949 provided its adoption does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. This measure establishes and appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i to develop wildfire susceptibility and vulnerability maps for the State of Hawaii.

These maps 1) help identify areas that are more susceptible to wildfire hazard, 2) allow decision-makers to prioritize high-risk areas for targeted risk reduction strategies, and 3) assist in the development of adaptation policies that lessen the disastrous impacts of future wildfires. Decision-makers can use wildfire vulnerability maps to guide zoning regulations to reduce the impact of wildfires on communities. Moreover, authorities will be more informed about policies allowing construction in vulnerable areas and locating essential facilities (e.g., hospitals, schools, and firefighting stations) in areas that are less vulnerable to wildfires.

In collaboration with the National Weather Service, the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources-Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Hawai'i-Emergency Management Agency, and county fire departments, the results of this project will be used to develop the best mitigation strategies such as ecological forest management (fuel reduction to restore to natural conditions), creation of defensible space (using native and/or fire-resistant vegetation), and development of greenbelts (diverse vegetation including trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers, that act as natural buffers to create separation from wildlands) in each county to reduce the impacts of wildfires.

The UH Mānoa (UHM) College of Engineering and UHM Water Resources Research Center's research capabilities, combined with the extensive outreach activities and technical solutions from the UHM College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, will provide the full range of skillsets and research, as well as the climate data necessary to develop this important tool for Hawaii's decision-makers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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January 29, 2024

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

The Honorable Amy A. Perruso, Chair
The Honorable Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Higher Education & Technology

Wednesday, January 31, 2024, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Subject: Strong Support of HB 1949 Relating to the Generation of Wildfire Susceptibility Maps for Hawai'i

I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1949 that proposes to establish a two-year web-GIS program to determine building, infrastructure, landscape, and communities that are most vulnerable to future wildfires.

Having wildfire susceptibility and vulnerability maps are beneficial to public safety. This information will allow the public to be aware of areas susceptible to wildfires and allow those in high-risk areas to be prepared for the potential of wildfires. As a Honolulu City Councilmember, I also look forward to how the results can assist our county Fire departments and law enforcement in mapping out plans for those high-risk structures and infrastructures.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Radiant Cordero".

Radiant Cordero
Councilmember, District VII



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND and
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 430
Wednesday, January 31, 2024 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Water & Land
To The Honorable Amy A. Perruso, Chair
The Honorable Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Higher Education & Technology

**COMMENTS on HB1949 RELATING TO THE GENERATION OF
WILDFIRE SUSCEPTIBILITY MAPS FOR HAWAII**

The Maui Chamber of Commerce would like to **COMMENT on HB1949** which requires the University of Hawaii to establish and implement a 2-year program to develop web-GIS wildfire susceptibility and vulnerability maps for the State of Hawaii to determine which communities, landscapes, buildings, and infrastructure are most vulnerable to future wildfires, appropriates moneys, and declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025.

The Chamber supports and appreciates the University of Hawaii doing this project as it builds capacity and workforce in our state. However, we feel that the state should also explore private partners, who may be best skilled with previous experience and/or create university/private partnerships to accomplish this goal.

We would like to suggest that this effort and the effort in HB1924 (relating to a wildfire forecast system for Hawaii) be combined.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer **COMMENTS on HB1949**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

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

HB-1949

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 9:29:51 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor