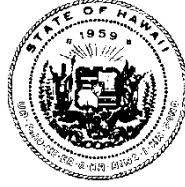


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of DEAN MINAKAMI

Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 10:01 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

In consideration of H.B. 2610 PROPOSED SD2 RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports with amendments** HB 2610 Proposed SD2, which establishes a Disaster Relief Match Special Fund to support the local match requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Maui Wildfires Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and makes various appropriations to support the State's continued response to the August 2023 wildfires.

As it relates to HHFDC, this bill changes the means of financing for the existing \$230 million in combined appropriations to HHFDC's Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund and Rental Housing Revolving Fund from general funds to general obligation bond funds.

Section 21 of the bill makes the following Capital Improvement Project (CIP) appropriations from reimbursable general obligation bonds (D funds) for FY 2025, as follows:

- \$40 million for infrastructure for temporary housing in West Maui
- \$75 million for infrastructure for temporary modular housing units in West Maui

We request that this bill be **amended** to clarify that the above two CIP appropriations are to HHFDC (BED160). Additionally, we note what appears to be a scrivener's error in Section 21—as written the combined appropriation is \$115 billion, as highlighted below.

H.B. 2610 PROPOSED SD2 RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF
PAGE 2

13	<u>XX.</u>	<u>TEMPORARY HOUSING, MAUI</u>			
14					
15		<u>PLANS, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION,</u>			
16		<u>ACQUISITION, AND EQUIPMENT FOR</u>			
17		<u>INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING IN</u>			
18		<u>WEST MAUI</u>			
19		<u>TOTAL FUNDING</u>	<u>BED</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>40,000,000 D</u>
20	<u>XX.</u>	<u>MODULAR HOUSING FOR TEMPORARY</u>			
21		<u>UNITS, MAUI</u>			
22					
23		<u>PLANS, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION,</u>			
24		<u>ACQUISITION, AND EQUIPMENT FOR</u>			
25		<u>INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MODULAR HOUSING FOR</u>			
26		<u>TEMPORARY UNITS IN WEST MAUI</u>			
27		<u>TOTAL FUNDING</u>	<u>BED</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>75,000,000 D"</u>

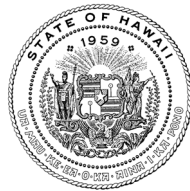
Lastly, we request that Section 20 of the bill be amended so that item A-24 of Part II of Act 164, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, reflects the operating budget ceiling increase included in H.B. 1800 HD1, highlighted as follows:

<u>EXPENDING</u>	<u>FISCAL</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>FISCAL</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>AGENCY</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>O</u>
	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>F</u>
				48.00#
BED	13,533,889W	[14,046,265W]		
				16,022,225W
BED	3,000,000P		3,000,000P	
BED	45,000,000C	[0C]		
				<u>230,500,000C</u>

Without the ceiling increase, the agency's mission, including its involvement in the rebuilding of Maui's permanent housing stock, will be significantly hampered.

HHFDC supports the Legislature's efforts to respond to the August 2023 Maui wildfires in a fiscally responsible manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 2610, H.D. 1, PROPOSED S.D. 2

March 27, 2024
10:01 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments in support of this bill.

House Bill (H.B.) No. 2610, H.D. 1, Proposed S.D. 2, Part I: 1) adds a new section to Chapter 127A, HRS, that establishes the Disaster Relief Match Special Fund (DRMSF), to be administered by the Department of Defense (DOD), to support the local match requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Maui Wildfires Hazard Mitigation Grant Program; 2) requires DOD to evaluate applications for funding from the special fund, recommend priority applications to FEMA, and establish criteria for evaluating requests from potential applicants for matching support out of the special fund; 3) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds for FY 25 to be deposited into the DRMSF; 4) and appropriates an unspecified amount of special funds out of the DRMSF for FY 25 to DOD for the purposes of this part.

H.B. No. 2610, H.D. 1, Proposed S.D. 2, Part II, makes the following appropriations for FY 25:

1. \$200,000,000 out of the State Risk Management Fund for State Risk Management and Insurance Administration (AGS 203) for insurance claim payments related to the Maui wildfires disaster;
2. \$186,160,000 in general funds for Departmental Administration and Budget Division (BUF 101) to transfer funds to other agencies for Maui wildfires recovery costs;
3. \$125,000 in general funds for Public Libraries (EDN 407) for temporary libraries in Makawao and Lahaina;
4. \$13,370,000 in general funds and \$12,751,554 in federal funds for General Administration – DHS (HMS 904) for 6.00 temporary federal-funded positions and emergency management related to the Maui wildfires;
5. \$521,473 out of the Conservation and Resources Enforcement Special Fund for Conservation and Resources Enforcement (LNR 405) for Maui wildfire recovery efforts;
6. \$653,082 in general funds for the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (DEF 118) for 20.00 permanent positions for Maui wildfire recovery;
7. \$1,000,000 out of the Public Utilities Commission Special Fund (PUCSF) for the Public Utilities Commission (CCA 901) for consultant contracts for utility dockets;
8. \$20,000,000 in federal funds for Administration and Operating Support (HHL 625) for wildfire response, recovery, and prevention measures;
9. \$7,425,000 in federal funds for Native Resources and Fire Protection Program (LNR 402) for fire response and rehabilitation and wildfire fuels reduction contracts;

10. \$10,000,000 in federal funds for Native Resources and Fire Protection Program (LNR 402) for fire and emergency response equipment;
11. \$900,000 out of the PUCSF for the Division of Consumer Advocacy (CCA 103) for consultant contracts for utility dockets;
12. \$2,360,000 in general obligation (G.O.) bond funds for Native Resources and Fire Protection Program (LNR 402) for fire prevention, erosion control, and fire suppression dip tanks for West and Upcountry Maui;
13. \$4,560,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for the County of Maui (COM) (SUB 401) for a final disposition site;
14. \$11,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for COM (SUB 401) for wastewater collection system repairs;
15. \$9,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for COM (SUB 401) for wastewater collection system laterals and cleanouts;
16. \$3,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for COM (SUB 401) for traffic signal replacement;
17. \$10,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for COM (SUB 401) for fire flow improvements to water systems;
18. \$10,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for COM (SUB 401) for water supply infrastructure repairs and replacements;
19. \$8,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for COM (SUB 401) for storm drainage, flood control, and water quality improvements;
20. \$8,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for COM (SUB 401) for roadway connectivity for disaster evacuation; and

21. \$6,600,000 in revenue bond funds and \$26,400,000 in federal funds for Maui Highways (TRN 531) for Lahaina Repair, Rehabilitation, and/or Reinstallation, Maui.

H.B. No. 2610, H.D. 1, Proposed S.D. 2, Part II, also amends Act 164, SLH 2023, by amending Sections 3 and 7 to:

1. Change the means of financing (MOF) of \$25,000,000 in general funds for FY 25 for Community Colleges' (UOH 800) CCS, Capital Renewal and Deferred Maintenance, Statewide, to G.O. bond funds;
2. Change the MOF of \$30,000,000 in general funds for FY 25 for Systemwide Support's (UOH 900) System, Renew, Improve, and Modernize, Statewide, to G.O. bond funds;
3. Reduce \$50,000,000 in general funds for FY 25 to infuse the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund (DURF) for affordable housing from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation's (HHFDC) (BED 160) operating budget and to add \$50,000,000 in G.O. bond funds for FY 25 to the program's investment capital budget for DURF Infusion, Statewide;
4. Reduce \$180,000,000 in general funds for FY 25 to infuse the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF) for affordable housing from HHFDC's (BED 160) operating budget and to add \$180,000,000 in G.O. bond funds for FY 25 to the program's investment capital budget for RHRF Infusion, Statewide;
5. Add \$40,000,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for FY 25 for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) for Temporary Housing, Maui; and

6. Add \$75,000,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for FY 25 for DBEDT for Modular Housing for Temporary Units, Maui.

H.B. No. 2610, H.D. 1, Proposed S.D. 2, Part II, further provides an extended lapse date of June 30, 2026, for capital improvement projects appropriated by the bill.

While B&F supports the intent to provide adequate funding for FY 25 disaster relief related to the Maui wildfires, B&F would like to note that most of the items appropriated in Part II of the bill were included in the FY 25 Executive Supplemental Budget (H.B. No. 1800) and that many of the items continue to be included, at least partially, in H.B. No. 1800, H.D. 1. B&F strongly recommends that critical disaster relief items for Maui wildfires response and recovery efforts for FY 25 be included in the FY 25 Supplemental Budget bill as opposed to separate specific appropriations bills to minimize administrative burdens and potential implementation delays and to ensure that the positions are properly reflected in departments' budgets and will not need additional work to insert them into the State's budget in the next legislative session.

Another reason to utilize the FY 25 Supplemental Budget bill for funding Maui wildfire items in FY 25 is because when there are multiple bills that amend the budget, the bill that is enacted last supersedes the previously enacted bills and sets the authorized budgets of the Executive Branch, even if each amending bill contains distinct additions to the budget that are necessary for State operations. Since the FY 25 Supplemental Budget bill needs to be enacted first, any of its budget adjustments to BED 160, UOH 800, and UOH 900 that are unrelated to disaster relief (e.g., community colleges scholarship funding, mental health counselors for the University of Hawai'i system, etc.) will not be effective until after H.B. No. 2610, H.D. 1, Proposed S.D. 2, is enacted.

B&F would also like to note that there may be a potential subject-title conflict if the nexus between the amendments made to Act 164, SLH 2023, to change FY 25 general fund appropriations to G.O. bond fund appropriations and the funding of Maui wildfire disaster relief is not clarified further in the bill.

B&F also has the following technical concerns with the appropriation of \$115,000,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds for FY 25 for DBEDT: 1) given that the values in Section 7 of Act 164, SLH 2023, are supposed to represent amounts in the 1,000s and that the appropriations have unusually large values, it appears that there are typos and that the values should only be 40,000 for Temporary Housing, Maui, and 75,000 for Modular Housing for Temporary Units, Maui, to provide the projects \$40,000,000 and \$75,000,000 in reimbursable G.O. bond funds, respectively, in FY 25; and 2) the amendments to Section 3 of Act 164, SLH 2023, do not reflect any addition of reimbursable G.O. bond funds, which creates ambiguity as to which DBEDT program is supposed to administer the projects and a conflict between the amended totals of Sections 3 and 7 of Act 164, SLH 2023.

Finally, as a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding H.B. No. 2610, H.D. 1, Proposed S.D. 2, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed special fund would be self-sustaining.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony IN SUPPORT of HB2610 HD1 SD1.

As we all are painfully aware, on August 8, last year, wildfires devastated Lahaina and parts of upland Maui. Assistance from across the State and from the mainland rushed to support Maui during the initial response to these terrible wildfires and into the on-going recovery from their devastating impacts. In particular, FEMA provided substantial response and recovery assistance via several programs, including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) which provides funding that communities can use to build back better and stronger as well as to reduce the impact of other natural hazards statewide. The current, 6-month estimate of the HMGP funding under the Maui Wildfire disaster is about \$300,000,000. This estimate is 15% of the total FEMA funding under its Public Assistance (PA) program, Individual Assistance (IA) program and certain Mission Assignments (MA). FEMA will “lock-in” the HMGP funding at the 1-year anniversary of the declaration date, August 10, 2023, so the final estimate could be substantially higher as FEMA’s other assistance continues to increase.

The HMGP requires a non-federal match which is 25% of the overall project cost. The current estimate of this 25% cost share is \$100,000,000 (i.e. matching the 75% federal share of \$300,000,000.) Historically, finding and maintaining the local, non-federal match has been a huge impediment to communities wanting to use this funding for their Hazard Mitigation projects. As a result, good projects have not been funded or have been withdrawn for lack of the local match. This problem is exacerbated by FEMA’s sometimes lengthy review and approval process, which can be up to 18 months. It is challenging for communities to have their match funding sit idle during FEMA’s lengthy and uncertain review.

HB2610 HD1 SD1 will address this specific hurdle to the complete and efficient use of the HMGP by establishing a fund to support communities in meeting the HMGP match requirement. The bill designates the Department of Defense’s Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) as the agency to administer the match fund. This is an appropriate fit since HI-EMA currently administers and manages FEMA’s recovery programs, including the HMGP. HI-EMA’s experience working with FEMA on a range of recovery projects and its expertise in evaluating HMGP proposals will facilitate the establishment of appropriate criteria for distributing the match fund, effectively and equitably, to those applicants with strong proposals that would most benefit from receiving match support. The bill intends the support to be up to half of the required match for most projects. However, in the case of small, economically disadvantaged applicants, the support could cover the entire match.

By providing this match fund, we will make it more likely that our communities will be able to take advantage of FEMA’s HMGP funding and will assist Maui and the State in rebuilding safer, stronger, and smarter, and in creating a more resilient Hawaii by mitigating the impact of natural hazards.

I look forward to your support of HB 2610 HD1 SD1 and to working together to build a safer, stronger, and more resilient Hawaii.

David Kennard

Chair, State Hazard Mitigation Forum

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KENNETH S. HARA
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420



STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2610 HD1 SD2,
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

MARCH 27, 2024

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **SUPPORT with Comments on HB 2610 HD1 SD 2.**

I believe this legislative measure would have immense benefits for our community and its ability to recover and mitigate future disasters effectively should the establishment of a Disaster Relief Match Special Fund be created.

The devastating impact of the Maui wildfires cannot be overstated. Not only did they cause significant damage to properties, natural resources, and infrastructure, but they also put the lives and safety of our communities in Lahaina at risk.

The need for immediate and comprehensive action to restore and rebuild our community is evident. This bill would provide a crucial financial mechanism to address the local match requirements of the FEMA Grant program, ensuring that we can maximize the available federal assistance to expedite our recovery efforts. The proposed Senate Draft 2 provided for HI-EMA to receive the 20 FTE positions for the Maui Wildfire incident which is needed due to the scale of this disaster.

Furthermore, the establishment of a Disaster Relief Match Special Fund would alleviate the burden on local authorities and communities in securing the necessary funds to meet the required match amounts set by FEMA. It would enable HI-EMA to access federal grants that might otherwise be out of reach due to limited local resources.

HI-EMA's comments would be that the amount blanked out in the earlier version be reestablished with the amount of \$11.7 million for FY'24 - FY'25 and for additional funds for FY'25 - FY '26. With these funds, our agency will be able to provide future statewide projects the funding for our State's climate mitigation needs.

HI-EMA is in support of House Bill 2610 HD1 SD2 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

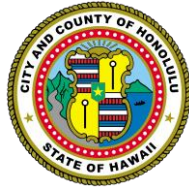
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2610 HD1 SD2.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY
KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11th FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: resilientoahu@honolulu.gov • INTERNET: www.resilientoahu.org

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



MATTHEW GONSER, AICP, CFM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

BENJAMIN SULLIVAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR &
DEPUTY CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, 10:01 A.M.

STATE OF HAWAII
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2610 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF**

BY,

MATTHEW GONSER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu (“City”) Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) **supports HB2610 HD1 SD1**, which establishes a disaster relief match special fund to support the local match requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency Maui Wildfires Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for eligible projects that implement mitigation measures to prevent and minimize impacts of natural hazards.

Funding from and collaboration between the federal, state, and county governments will be necessary to manage the cost share requirements of the HMGP. Historically, the 25 percent local cost share requirement has been a barrier to the complete and efficient use of HMGP awarded to the state. HB2610 HD1 SD1 proposes to alleviate this barrier by providing a 50 percent match to applicants or totally covering the cost-share requirement for small, economically disadvantaged communities that are often the most heavily impacted by natural hazard events. Fully utilizing the HMGP will promote increased community resilience state-wide by using these funds to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards on our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2610 HD1 SD1.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

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



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

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

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

March 25, 2024

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 27, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2610,
HD1, PROPOSED SD2, RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF**

I **support** this measure to establish the Disaster Relief Match Special Fund and appropriate funds to support the State's continued response to the August 2023 wildfires.

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

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. The cost of rebuilding after the August 2023 Maui wildfires is estimated to be in the billions. Collaboration between and funding from Federal, State, and County governments will be necessary to overcome this immense cost. This measure provides valuable funding for the rebuilding and relief efforts.
2. Navigating the federal grant process can be daunting, and failure to do so in a timely manner can result in applicants not receiving grant funds. This measure allows applicants to more easily meet local matching fund requirements, easing part of the burden of accessing the hazard mitigation grant.
3. This measure appropriates funds to support a wide range of programs with urgent needs, including West Maui and Upcountry fire prevention, fire suppression, and erosion control; County of Maui infrastructure, including the final disposition site; and roadway connectivity for disaster evacuation.

Thank you for your consideration.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 225
Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 10:01 A.M.

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Ways and Means

SUPPORT HB2610 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB2610 HD1 SD1**.

The Chamber supports the establishment of a disaster relief match special fund and appropriate funds to provide the local match requirements of the Maui wildfires hazard mitigation grant program.

We note that the bill proposes to fund this money from the general fund. **We would like to suggest using the Emergency and Budget Reserve (EBR) fund and possibly the hurricane relief fund instead.** We realize that it takes a two-thirds vote from both chambers to appropriate from the ERB fund. We feel this a very definite emergency that would qualify for use of these funds. We all must come together on solutions when dealing with catastrophic events.

We appreciate the forward thinking of this initiative. We hope that the state will continue to explore federal and other methods of funding for expediting protective measures in order to help lessen the impacts of future disasters.

The Chamber looks forward to continued discussions on this and other related bills to find the best possible solutions.

For these reasons we **SUPPORT HB2610 HD1 SD1** and respectfully ask that it be passed with our suggested amendment.

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.

Date: March 25, 2024

To: The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

From: Stephanie Soo, University of Hawaii at Manoa Student

Re: **SUPPORT** for HB2610 HD1 SD1, Relating to Disaster Relief

Hearing: Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 10:01 AM at Capitol Room 211 & Videoconference

Aloha, Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of HB2610 HD1 SD1, which would establish a Disaster Relief Match Special Fund to support the local match requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Maui Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

As we tragically witnessed the catastrophic wildfires in August 2023, Maui County is still highly susceptible to wildfires. This devastating disaster has not only caused extensive damage to property, infrastructure, and our natural environment, but it has also taken precious lives and displaced countless residents.

The FEMA Maui Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is a light of hope in the fight against wildfires. It provides a tremendous opportunity to obtain critical resources for proactive measures that may dramatically lower the risk of future wildfires while also protecting our communities.

I believe this bill is essential because it will lower the wildfire risk by allowing Maui County to utilize FEMA funds to focus on prevention, preparedness, and response, ensuring that communities are better equipped to handle wildfires. By investing in these projects, Maui County can build resilience and safeguard both lives and property from the devastating impacts of wildfires.

I strongly encourage you to consider HB2610 HD1 SD1. It is critical that we prioritize our communities' safety and well-being by supporting measures that reduce the risk of wildfires. By passing this bill, we can take proactive steps toward protecting our environment and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Maui County.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Soo
soosteph@hawaii.edu