



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

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 3375, RELATING TO WILDFIRE PREVENTION.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS AND ON WATER AND LAND

DATE: Thursday, February 8, 2024 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 229 and Videoconference

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

Chairs Kim, Wakai, and Inouye and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill: (1) requires the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to develop a central Oahu wildfire protection plan in consultation with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, community stakeholders, and nonprofit organizations that specialize in wildfire preparedness and mitigation programming; and (2) conditions an appropriation of funds for the purposes of this bill upon the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources and nonprofit organizations that specialize in wildfire preparedness and mitigation programming providing matching funds from United States Department of Agriculture Forestry Service Wildfire Defense grants for purposes of this bill.

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.

SB-3375

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 4:40:50 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/8/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I appreciate the intent of the measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

By
Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And
Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 3375 – RELATING TO WILDFIRE PREVENTION

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 3375 relating to wildfire prevention. The bill appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to establish a Central O'ahu Wildfire Prevention Plan, in consultation with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), community stakeholders, and nonprofit organizations that specialize in wildfire preparedness and mitigation programming. The bill requires matching funds from USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense grants.

CTAHR concurs that the bill correctly identifies the scale and severity of Hawaii's wildfire issues and the unique challenges the state must cope with to reduce risk. The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is identified as a key element in beginning the process of wildfire risk mitigation as the Central O'ahu region of the state is one of the few remaining areas lacking a CWPP. CWPPs not only gather community input and identify appropriate risk reduction measures, they also facilitate raising funds from fire-related federal sources.

CTAHR Cooperative Extension faculty and staff have had long-standing involvement and partnerships with wildfire response and mitigation in Hawai'i by providing the best available information on the science of land management and by supporting land use planning. As appropriate, we will request assistance and feedback from DLNR and other relevant departments, and we will consult with community stakeholders and nonprofit organizations, and seek their cooperation in gathering information and data.

The bill would therefore facilitate CTAHR's continued involvement in and support for wildfire risk reduction efforts on Oahu both through direct funding and providing capacity to leverage additional federal funds. We are convinced that with adequate resources, the establishment of a central Oahu wildfire protection plan will help us better support wildfire prevention and fire management in local communities.

CTAHR supports the intent of SB 3375 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.

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