

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1890

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 15 2025

RE: H.C.R. No. 69  
H.D. 1  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2025  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, to which was referred H.C.R. No. 69, H.D. 1, entitled:

"HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL TO CONVENE A VEGETATION MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP TO STUDY, EVALUATE, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGULATIONS THAT DEFINE PROPERTY OWNER OBLIGATIONS FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY TO MITIGATE WILDFIRE RISK, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT DEFINE A LINE CLEARANCE TREE TRIMMER AND ESTABLISH MINIMUM SAFETY STANDARDS, TRAINING, AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS PERFORMING LINE CLEARANCE TREE TRIMMING AT OR NEAR ELECTRIC UTILITY FACILITIES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to request the Office of the State Fire Marshal to convene a Vegetation Management Working Group to study, evaluate, and make recommendations for regulations that define property owner obligations for vegetation management on public and private property to mitigate wildfire risk, and make recommendations that define a line clearance tree trimmer and establish minimum safety standards, training, and qualifications for individuals performing line clearance tree trimming at or near electric utility facilities.



Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Public Utilities Commission, Hawaiian Electric, Charter Communications, Kamehameha Schools, Life of the Land, and two individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from Hawaiian Telcom, Inc.

Your Committee finds that the tragedy and devastation of the Maui wildfires that arose during the August 8, 2023, windstorm must be prevented from reoccurring. Vegetation management, including the creation of firebreaks and the removal of buildup of flammable vegetation, is viewed as essential for the mitigation of wildfire risks and the promotion of safer conditions for communities and the environment. However, the combination of an electric utility's numerous easement and right-of-way agreements, along with the fragmented ownership of public and private lands in a state with limited land availability, poses significant challenges to developing clear and consistent vegetation management regulations. Accordingly, this measure requests the Office of the State Fire Marshal to convene a Vegetation Management Working Group to make recommendations for regulations defining property owner obligations for vegetation management to mitigate wildfire risk. This measure further requests the Vegetation Management Working Group to make certain recommendations regarding line clearance tree trimmers to establish industry standards for those doing this work relating to vegetation management. These requests will provide for comprehensive vegetation management in the State.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the utility companies that have miles of utility lines installed throughout the State are electric utility companies;
- (2) Adding language stating that communication equipment, by nature, does not independently create wildfire risks, making its role in vegetation management appropriately limited;



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- (3) Adding language stating that other states such as Oregon and Washington appropriately regulate vegetation management requirements specifically for electric utilities due to the unique wildfire hazards posed by high-voltage power lines;
- (4) Adding the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, or their designee, to the list of requested membership for the Working Group;
- (5) Adding the Superintendent of Education, or the Superintendent's designee, to the list of requested membership for the Working Group;
- (6) Removing a representative of a telecommunications carrier from the list of requested invitees to the Working Group and substituting a representative of a communications service provider; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.C.R. No. 69, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto as H.C.R. No. 69, H.D. 1, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Public Safety and  
Military Affairs,

  
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BRANDON J.C. ELEFANTE, Chair



