

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

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
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
JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Tuesday, February 11, 2025
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 175, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO PROPERTY MAINTENANCE.

House Bill 175, House Draft 1 requires owners or lessees of real property to maintain their property and establish penalties for failure to do so; allows for exceptions; requires the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to establish rules for the enforcement and collection of fines for violations relating to the proliferation of invasive species; and requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to adopt rules for the enforcement and collection of fines for violations relating to the prevention of wildfires and other public safety hazards. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The North American Invasive Species Management Association estimates that about one-quarter of Hawai'i's land area (about one million acres) is covered in flammable invasive grasses and shrubs and is at a higher risk of wildfire than 16 western states. Analysis from 2020 suggests that 94.4% of Hawai'i homes are vulnerable to wildfires because their communities are within or adjacent to invasive and flammable grasses. Additionally, invasive grasses played a role in the devastating Lahaina fire, which resulted in an increased statewide focus on wildlife prevention and control efforts. The Department supports this effort to reduce the proliferation of invasive and flammable grass.

The bill addresses environmental and public safety hazards that neglected properties create, including serving as breeding grounds for invasive species, raising the risk of wildfires, and adversely affecting surrounding communities. Addressing property neglect is essential to protect Hawai'i's ecosystems, mitigate wildfire risks, and maintain the quality of life for residents. The Department supports this effort to require owners to maintain their property with the imposition of penalties.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



"Advancing the Commercial Real Estate Industry through Education, Networking and Advocacy"

To: Hawaii State Legislature
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2025
Time: 2:00PM
Place: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE or Conference Room 325
RE: Testimony with **comments**, HB175 HD1, Relating to Property Maintenance

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

We are the Building Owners and Managers Association - Hawai'i (BOMA Hawai'i) testifying with **comments** on HB175 HD1, Relating to Property Maintenance. This bill addresses the maintenance of real property to mitigate environmental and public safety risks by establishing requirements for property owners and lessees to prevent the proliferation of invasive species, reduce wildfire hazards, ensure public safety through proper property maintenance, outline penalties for noncompliance, and provide exceptions for certain circumstances.

The proposed legislation highlights concerns regarding property neglect and its broader impact on ecosystems, wildfire prevention, and community well-being. By outlining enforcement mechanisms, fines, and implementation procedures, HB175 HD1 aims to encourage responsible property maintenance. The bill also allows for exceptions in cases of active restoration, conservation efforts, or conditions beyond an owner's reasonable control.

BOMA Hawai'i is a non-profit trade association dedicated to advancing the commercial real estate industry through education, networking and advocacy. Please consider BOMA Hawai'i as a resource to the legislature.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

Jamie Barboza
BOMA Hawai'i Government Affairs Committee Chair



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the House Committee on
Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

In Consideration of House Bill No. 175 HD 1
RELATING TO PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

To Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and the honorable members of the committees,

We are writing on behalf of Lāhainā Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 35,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

Lāhainā Strong, stands in **support of House Bill 175 HD 1**, which requires owners or lessees of real property to maintain their property and establish penalties for failure to do so. Lahaina's wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown lots filled with dry brush and invasive plants created fuel for the fire, endangering entire communities. Property owners must be held accountable for maintaining their land—not just for aesthetics, but for public safety and the protection of lives. For our community to feel safe returning and rebuilding, this bill is absolutely necessary—not just for our safety, but to prevent another disaster.

Lāhainā Strong urges your **support for HB175 HD1** to ensure stronger fire prevention measures, proactive enforcement, and a safer future for our communities.

Mahalo for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lāhainā Strong



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 325
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 AT 2:00 P.M.

To The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

SUPPORT HB175 HD1 RELATING TO PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB175 HD1** which requires owners, lessees, or managers of real property to maintain their property and establish penalties for failure to do so.

The Chamber was initially concerned about the potential impact on businesses and residents due to the proposed penalties for violations in the new section of HRS. Many residents and businesses may not be fully aware of the complexities of fire protection or invasive species laws. Therefore, we recommended strengthening the bill by adding language that would allow owners, occupants, or other responsible parties a reasonable period (at the county's discretion) to address the issue.

The current amended version, which gives a 30-day window for compliance, is an improvement over the previous version of the bill. We also support the language that recognizes property owners who are actively working to remediate the issue. Additionally, we fully support the increase in fines and daily assessments for those who refuse to comply.

Furthermore, we strongly support the inclusion of educational initiatives to ensure that both public and private property owners are informed and able to maintain their properties in a safe manner. We request that this committee add language requiring these educational initiatives.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT HB175 HD1** and request consideration for our 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.

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 11:04:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

What resources will be allocated to enforce this?

i would like to know how much of our tax dollars will be used to fund the enforcement of HB175, and an assessment of how this will be enforced.

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:48:56 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

seems like we wouldn't need a law to have people and corporations to have them keep their communities safe - but since we do, i support this 100%

mahalo

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:07:01 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your support for HB175 HD1 to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:15:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie Nogaro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 175 HD1

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your support for HB175 HD1 to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Jessie Nogaro

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:34:06 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keila Paahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal's role in prevention. Lahaina's wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn't just about appearance—it's about saving lives.

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:04:39 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your support for HB175 HD1 to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Shay Chan Hodges

Maui, Hawaii

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:28:02 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aviva Libitsky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 175 HD1

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your support for HB175 HD1 to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Aviva Libitsky

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:19:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
De Andre Makakoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Lahaina burned because of negligence—because landowners let dry brush and invasive grass take over, creating a tinderbox waiting to ignite. **House Bill 175 HD1 is about accountability.** It ensures that property owners take responsibility for maintaining their land so that **neglect doesn't turn into another catastrophe.**

Overgrown lots aren't just an eyesore—they're a **direct threat to public safety.** Invasive plants like guinea grass fuel fast-moving fires, putting entire communities at risk. **HB175 HD1 strengthens the role of the State Fire Marshal in prevention, giving our state the enforcement power it desperately needs.**

Our fire departments are already stretched thin. **We cannot afford to wait until the next disaster to act.** This bill puts proactive fire prevention into law, where it belongs.

I urge you to pass **HB175 HD1** to protect our communities and ensure that landowners take responsibility before their neglect costs lives.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to fire prevention.

De Andre Makakoa

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:56:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kara Kiernan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 175 HD1

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support of House Bill 175 HD1**, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your **support for HB175 HD1** to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Kara Kiernan

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:36:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristy Lam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your support for HB175 HD1 to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Kristy

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:02:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Kau'i Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal's role in prevention. Lahaina's wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn't just about appearance—it's about saving lives.

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Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:11:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm in support of Bill HB175 HD1

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:36:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Carter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your support for HB175 HD1 to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Paul Carter

201 River Rd.

Wailuku, Hawaii

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:43:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 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 (Cards) Pintor

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:55:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Winternitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. I urge you to support HB175 HD1 to safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Elizabeth Winternitz, Kula

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:57:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Mcveigh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

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Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Sierra Mcveigh

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:42:43 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalae	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We gotta clean up these yards and get rid of the invasive species.

Mahalo

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:09:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelcy Durbin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

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Our fire departments are stretched thin—proactive enforcement is critical. We can’t wait for another disaster to act. We urge your support for HB175 HD1 to help safeguard our community from further devastation.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Kelcy Durbin

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:18:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicki Tedesco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

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Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Nicki Tedesco

HB-175-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:30:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Noelani Ahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 175 HD1

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 175 HD1, which holds property owners accountable for maintenance and strengthens the State Fire Marshal’s role in prevention. Lahaina’s wildfire tragedy showed us how dangerous neglected properties can be. Overgrown properties with dry brush and invasive plants are a fire hazard, endangering entire communities. Requiring owners to keep their land clear isn’t just about appearance—it’s about saving lives.

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Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Noelani Ahia