



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/27/2025

Time: 10:25 AM

Location: CR 211 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Judiciary
Senate Ways and Means

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: SB 0223, SD1 RELATING TO FIRE PREVENTION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the State Fire Council to amend the State Fire Code to require certain owners and occupants of properties located in hazardous fire areas to maintain effective firebreaks within thirty feet of the property and to practice other fire prevention activities. Establishes the Community Fuels Reduction Project to be administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on SB 223, SD 1.

The Department recognizes the importance of maintaining an effective firebreak by removing and clearing flammable vegetation and combustible growth from areas near buildings, structures, and other premises. However, in order to carry out the mandates of this bill, resources and funding will be needed and pursuant to Section 302A-1316, Hawaii Revised Statutes, individual schools can no longer use any school funds to maintain any geographically disadvantageous land on or adjacent to its property.

While the Department supports the overall concept of SB 223, SD 1, we currently do not have the staff and resources to implement this. The Department would need funding for the following:

1. Full-Time Positions (e.g., certified arborist, tree trimmers, laborers, truck drivers);
2. Vehicles (e.g., pickup trucks, bucket truck with boom, chipper trucks, landscape trucks);
3. Equipment (e.g., excavator, stump grinder, wood chipper); and
4. Work Location (e.g., baseyard where the staff, vehicles, and equipment will be housed).

As this will require continuous, ongoing maintenance, the Department would need to be appropriated funds annually in order to do this.

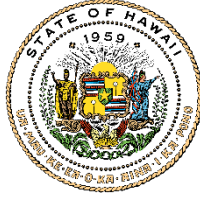
Also, the Department believes it would need to have work units on each of the islands in order to address this in the most efficient way possible.

The Department appreciates the intent of this bill, but asks that any potential consideration of positions or funding for the Department to implement does not affect the Department's Governor-approved top budget priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 223, SD 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKUAĀINA 'Ō HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

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LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
WAYS AND MEANS
and
JUDICIARY

Thursday, February 27, 2025
10:25 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 223, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO FIRE PREVENTION

Senate Bill 223, Senate Draft 1 requires the State Fire Council to amend the State Fire Code to require certain owners and occupants of properties in hazardous fire areas to maintain effective firebreaks within thirty feet of the property and practice other fire prevention activities. Establishes the Community Fuels Reduction Project to be administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department). Requires a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources appreciates the intent of this measure and offers comments.**

Regarding Part II Section 2 of this bill, the Department is not legally authorized to perform fuel reduction work on lands not set aside for the Department. To implement the community fuels reduction project as written, HRS Chapter 185 would need to be amended to grant the Department the authority to perform this work on lands they do not own or control, and the Legislature would need to provide funding and personnel to perform the work. And with such a mandate would come liability that should be addressed. Department staff can work with legislators and legislative staff to provide more details on these issues.

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