
SENATE 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 THE RESPECTIVE OBLIGATIONS OF PROPERTY OWNERS, LESSEES, LICENSEES, PERMITTEES, AND HOLDERS OF EASEMENTS FOR ACCESS, UTILITY, OR OTHER PURPOSES, 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.

1 WHEREAS, on August 8, 2023, catastrophic wildfires swept
2 through various communities on the island of Maui; and
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4 WHEREAS, the wildfires significantly impacted human life
5 and the health, community housing, education, economy, and
6 environment of Maui residents; and
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8 WHEREAS, the presence of grass, trees, and other vegetation
9 adjacent to or under electric utility lines is a significant
10 fire risk; and
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12 WHEREAS, in response to the wildfires, in 2023 the House of
13 Representatives established six interim working groups,
14 including the Wildfire Prevention Working Group, which were
15 charged with evaluating specific topics related to the Lahaina
16 wildfire and making recommendations for specific legislative
17 action; and
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19 WHEREAS, the Wildfire Prevention Working Group found that
20 people are the primary drivers of wildfires in Hawaii, as
21 ninety-nine percent of wildfires are caused by human ignitions;
22 and
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1 WHEREAS, the Wildfire Prevention Working Group also found
2 that guinea grass, fountain grass, molasses grass, and
3 buffelgrass can form continuous fuel beds, ignite easily, attain
4 extremely high fine fuel loads, and grow back more vigorously in
5 the post-fire environment than the majority of native
6 vegetation; and
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8 WHEREAS, utility companies have miles of utility lines
9 installed throughout the State on public and private lands,
10 including within the public rights of way and mountainous areas
11 of the State; and
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13 WHEREAS, a significant portion of these public lands is
14 covered with unmanaged grasses, trees, and other vegetation that
15 may pose a significant wildfire risk; and
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17 WHEREAS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that
18 the tree industry average annual fatal-incident rate is thirty
19 times greater than the all-industry average annual
20 fatal-incident rate; and
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22 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that other state
23 jurisdictions have recognized the additional hazard presented to
24 individuals performing line clearance tree trimming at or near
25 electric utility facilities and have adopted state law requiring
26 minimum safety standards, training, and qualifications for
27 individuals performing such work; and
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29 WHEREAS, additional study into appropriate vegetation
30 management will enable the State to develop appropriate
31 policies, regulations, and guidance for the parties responsible
32 for the management of vegetation on public and private lands to
33 mitigate wildfire risk and establish minimum safety standards,
34 training, and qualifications for individuals performing line
35 clearance tree trimming at or near electric utility facilities;
36 now, therefore,
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38 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
39 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
40 that the Office of the State Fire Marshal is requested to
41 convene a Vegetation Management Working Group (Working Group) to
42 study, evaluate, and make recommendations for regulations that



1 define the respective obligations of property owners, lessees,
2 licensees, permittees, and holders of easements for access,
3 utility, or other purposes, for vegetation management on public
4 and private property to mitigate wildfire risk, and make
5 recommendations that define a line clearance tree trimmer and
6 establish minimum safety standards, training, and qualifications
7 for individuals performing line clearance tree trimming at or
8 near electric utility facilities; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in its review of vegetation
11 management, the Working Group is requested to consider the
12 following:
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- 14 (1) Wildfire risk mitigation actions being proposed as
15 part of the Hawaiian Electric Company's Climate
16 Adaptation Transmission and Distribution and
17 Resilience Program and Wildfire Safety Strategy filed
18 with the Public Utilities Commission as Docket No.
19 2022-0135 and Docket No. 2025-0156, respectively; and
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- 21 (2) The hazard mitigation plans of electric utilities,
22 including the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative, filed
23 with the Public Utilities Commission as part of a
24 non-docketed proceeding under Case No. 2023-04661 in
25 response to Public Utilities Commission Order No.
26 40396; and
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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested
29 to include the following members:
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- 31 (1) The State Fire Marshal, or the Adjutant General's
32 designee, who is requested to serve as the chairperson
33 of the Working Group;
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- 35 (2) The Director of Transportation, or the Director's
36 designee;
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- 38 (3) The Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural
39 Resources, or the Chairperson's designee;
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- 41 (4) The Superintendent of Education, or the
42 Superintendent's designee;



- (5) The Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, or the Chairperson's designee;
- (6) A representative of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Division of Consumer Advocacy with experience in matters related to regulated public utilities, to be appointed by the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs;
- (7) A representative of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council;
- (8) A member of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- (9) A member of the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; and
- (10) The mayor of each county, or the mayor's designee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested to invite the following individuals to be members of the Working Group:

- (1) A representative of a cooperative electric utility;
- (2) A representative of an investor-owned electric utility;
- (3) A representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1260; and
- (4) A landowner that owns more than one thousand acres of land in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; and



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2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Defense is
3 requested to provide administrative support to the Working
4 Group, including drafting of the report; and
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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested
7 to dissolve on June 30, 2026; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
10 Resolution be transmitted to the Adjutant General of the
11 Department of Defense; Director of Transportation;
12 Superintendent of Education; Chairperson of the Department of
13 Land and Natural Resources; Director of Commerce and Consumer
14 Affairs; Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, who is
15 requested to transmit copies of this Resolution to all regulated
16 telecommunications carriers; Mayors of the Counties of Maui,
17 Kauai, and Hawaii and Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu;
18 President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaiian Electric
19 Company, Inc.; Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the
20 Kauai Island Utility Cooperative; and President of the
21 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union
22 1260.

