
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONVENE A VEGETATION MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP TO STUDY, EVALUATE, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING REGULATIONS THAT DEFINE PROPERTY OWNER OBLIGATIONS TO PERFORM VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION.

1 WHEREAS, on August 8, 2023, catastrophic wildfires swept
2 through various communities on the island of Maui; and

3

4 WHEREAS, the wildfires impacted human life, the community,
5 housing, education, the economy, the environment, and the health
6 of Maui residents; and

7

8 WHEREAS, a significant issue regarding fire safety is the
9 presence of grasses, trees, and other vegetation adjacent to or
10 under electric utility lines; and

11

12 WHEREAS, in response to the wildfires, the House of
13 Representatives established six interim working groups charged
14 with evaluating specific topics related to the wildfires and
15 making recommendations for specific legislative action; and

16

17 WHEREAS, the Wildfire Prevention Working Group, as one of
18 the six aforementioned working groups, found that people are the
19 primary drivers of wildfires in Hawaii, as ninety-nine percent
20 of wildfires are caused by human ignitions; and

21

22 WHEREAS, the Wildfire Prevention Working Group also found
23 that guinea grass, fountain grass, molasses grass, and
24 buffelgrass can form continuous fuel beds, ignite easily, attain
25 extremely high fine fuel loads, and are capable of growing back
26 more vigorously in the post-fire environment than the majority
27 of native vegetation; and

28



H.R. NO. 127

1 WHEREAS, utility companies have miles of utility lines
2 installed throughout the State on government and private land,
3 including within the public rights of way and mountainous areas
4 of the State; and

5

6 WHEREAS, a significant portion of the aforementioned public
7 and private lands is covered with unmanaged grasses, trees, and
8 other vegetation that may pose wildfire risk; and

9

10 WHEREAS, further study is necessary for policy, regulation,
11 and guidance pertaining to the management of and responsibility
12 for vegetation on public and private lands for wildlife risk
13 mitigation purposes; now, therefore,

14

15 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
16 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
17 Session of 2024, that the Department of Land and Natural
18 Resources is urged to convene a Vegetation Management Working
19 Group to study, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding
20 regulations that define property owner obligations to perform
21 vegetation management on public and private property for
22 purposes of wildfire risk mitigation; and

23

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Vegetation Management
25 Working Group is requested to focus on solutions to reduce
26 wildfire risk and the possibility of establishing a vegetation
27 management program as it relates to landowners and public
28 utilities; and

29

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Vegetation Management
31 Working Group is requested to include the following members:

32

33 (1) The Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
34 Resources or the Chairperson's designee, who is
35 requested to serve as the chairperson of the Working
36 Group;

37

38 (2) The Director of Transportation, or the Director's
39 designee;

40

41 (3) The Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, or
42 the Chairperson's designee;



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41

- (4) A representative of the Division of Consumer Advocacy of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, with experience in matters related to regulated public utilities, to be appointed by the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs;
- (5) A representative of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council;
- (6) A member of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- (7) A member of the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (8) The mayor of each county, or the mayor's designee;
- (9) A representative of a cooperative electric utility;
- (10) A representative of an investor-owned electric utility;
- (11) A representative of a telecommunications carrier;
- (12) A representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union 1260; and
- (13) 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 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested to dissolve on June 30, 2025; and



H.R. NO. 127

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
3 Land and Natural Resources; Director of Transportation;
4 Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, who in turn is
5 requested to provide copies of this Resolution to regulated
6 telecommunications carriers; Director of Commerce and Consumer
7 Affairs; Director of Business, Economic Development, and
8 Tourism; Director of Health; Chairperson of the Board of
9 Agriculture; President of the University of Hawaii; mayor of
10 each county; President and Chief Executive Officer of the
11 Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.; Chairperson of the Board of
12 Directors of the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative; President of
13 the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union
14 1260; and President of the Land Use Research Foundation of
15 Hawaii.

16
17
18

OFFERED BY:



MAR - 8 2024

