
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

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

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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

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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

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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

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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
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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

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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

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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,

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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

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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

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Vegetation Management
31 Working Group, in its review of vegetation management, is
32 requested to consider the wildfire mitigation actions that are
33 being proposed as part of the Hawaiian Electric Company's
34 Climate Adaptation Transmission and Distribution Resilience
35 Program in Docket No. 2022-0135 and the electric utilities'
36 (including Kauai Island Utility Cooperative) hazard mitigation
37 plans to be filed with the Public Utilities Commission
38 (Commission) over the next few months, in response to Commission
39 Order No. 40396. These plans will be filed as part of a non-
40 docketed proceeding under Case No. 2023-04661; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Vegetation Management
2 Working Group is requested to include the following members:

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- 4 (1) The Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
5 Resources or the Chairperson's designee, who is
6 requested to serve as the chairperson of the Working
7 Group;
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- 9 (2) The Director of Transportation, or the Director's
10 designee;
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- 12 (3) The Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, or
13 the Chairperson's designee;
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- 15 (4) A representative of the Division of Consumer Advocacy
16 of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs,
17 with experience in matters related to regulated public
18 utilities, to be appointed by the Director of Commerce
19 and Consumer Affairs;
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- 21 (5) A representative of the Hawaii Invasive Species
22 Council;
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- 24 (6) A member of the House of Representatives, to be
25 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
26 Representatives;
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- 28 (7) A member of the Senate, to be appointed by the
29 President of the Senate;
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- 31 (8) The mayor of each county, or the mayor's designee;
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- 33 (9) A representative of a cooperative electric utility;
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- 35 (10) A representative of an investor-owned electric
36 utility;
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- 38 (11) A representative of a telecommunications carrier;
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- 40 (12) A representative of the International Brotherhood of
41 Electrical Workers, Local Union 1260; and
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1 (13) A landowner that owns more than one thousand acres of
2 land in the State; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested
5 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
6 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
7 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
8 of 2025; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested
11 to dissolve on June 30, 2025; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
14 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
15 Land and Natural Resources; Director of Transportation;
16 Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, who in turn is
17 requested to provide copies of this Concurrent Resolution to
18 regulated telecommunications carriers; Director of Commerce and
19 Consumer Affairs; Director of Business, Economic Development,
20 and Tourism; Director of Health; Chairperson of the Board of
21 Agriculture; President of the University of Hawaii; mayor of
22 each county; President and Chief Executive Officer of the
23 Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.; Chairperson of the Board of
24 Directors of the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative; President of
25 the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union
26 1260; and President of the Land Use Research Foundation of
27 Hawaii.

