



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
H.B. NO. 2805, RELATING TO HEALTH.

BEFORE THE:
HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND AND ON
HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

DATE: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309 and Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chairs Ichiyama and Perruso and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

This bill, titled "Relating to Health," requires the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) to conduct a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires and to seek federal and community funding for the study. It also makes an appropriation for the purposes of the bill.

The Department has concerns about this bill. Article III, section 14, of the Hawai'i Constitution, provides in pertinent part that "[e]ach law shall embrace but one subject, which shall be expressed in its title." The subject of the bill, a study to be conducted by the UHERO, appears to be inconsistent with the title of the bill, Relating to Health. Should the Committee decide to pass this bill, we recommend limiting the scope of the study to the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires or finding another bill with a more appropriate subject title to accomplish the purpose of this bill.

Also, article X, section 6, of the Hawai'i Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "This section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern."

We recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water & Land
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Denise Eby Konan, Dean
College of Social Sciences

And

Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, Interim Dean
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chairs Ichiyama and Perruso, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Kapela, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB 2805, provided its adoption does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. This measure appropriates moneys for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The full impact of the Maui wildfires and the resulting devastation on the affected communities remain largely unknown. The effect of the wildfires on the health and welfare of Maui residents as well as the needs of the community should be examined carefully so that informed decisions can be made toward the implementation of policies necessary to the recovery process.

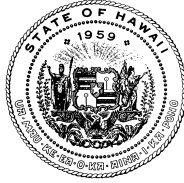
This bill, which supports the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), within the Social Sciences Research Institute, in collaboration with the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the UH Cancer Center, the UH Pacific Disaster Center (in Kihei, Maui), and numerous community-based organizations, seeks to conduct a comprehensive social and health study on the impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires on a diverse group of individuals. Additionally, the study aims to establish a registry of those affected by the wildfires to assess their long-term health and well-being, and the impacts on communities. We firmly believe that this research endeavor will provide invaluable information for the State of Hawai'i, local organizations, and policymakers.

The UHERO and related University of Hawai'i partners, including the John A. Burns School of Medicine, are ideally positioned to conduct a multiethnic cohort study which would provide policy makers with vital information concerning the Maui wildfires, health risks, and both short-term and long-term community needs.

UHERO has already begun the process of inviting Maui residents to participate in the study. Providing the funds needed to continue the study would benefit Maui and the state as a whole. The information gained from this study will add to the knowledge gained from work done in partnership between members of the Maui community, emergency, social and health systems with many University of Hawai'i units and additional JABSOM investigators exploring mental health, preparedness, response, recovery, and resiliency efforts. All of this will be helpful to mitigate the consequences of future disasters, including those attributed to climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A, M.P.H
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKOLE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of (HB2805)
RELATING TO HEALTH

REPRESENTATIVE LINDA ICHIYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

REPRESENTATIVE AMY PERRUSO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Hearing: Wednesday, January 31, 2024; 2:00 PM; Conference Room 309

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be
- 2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
- 3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request.
- 4 **Department Position:** The Department supports this measure.
- 5 **Department Testimony:** The Communicable Disease and Public Health Nursing Division
- 6 (CDPHND) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.
- 7 The Department of Health supports this measure to fund the University of Hawai‘i’s Economic
- 8 Research Organization’s multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires. This
- 9 study is vital to enhance the understanding of the broad and long-term health impacts of
- 10 wildfires and other natural disasters on the diverse communities of Hawai‘i.
- 11 The Maui wildfires caused not only immediate devastation but has also created long-term
- 12 health risks to the communities impacted, many of which are unknown. This study will allow
- 13 public health workers to better understand these health risks to guide resource allocation and
- 14 prevention activities. Further, the study’s design as a prospective cohort study using a pre-

1 existing multiethnic cohort for comparisons is vital to understanding the many ways Maui's
2 diverse communities have been impacted, especially those communities that were already
3 experiencing inequitable health outcomes before the wildfires. Understanding these different
4 health outcomes is crucial for state and local organizations, as well as policymakers, to best
5 allocate resources and develop health interventions and policies that meet the specific needs of
6 these communities. In addition, strengthening the local capacity to investigate and monitor
7 post-disaster health effects will benefit Hawaii into the future.

8 The Department is available to provide technical assistance and support the project from a
9 public health perspective and staff have met with the Principal Investigators to discuss
10 collaboration.

11 The Department also recognizes the significance of this study in contributing to our broader
12 understanding of the human health impacts of wildfires and other climate-related disasters.
13 Climate change is a public health crisis, and our State needs as much data as possible to
14 strengthen our public health resiliency as we move into the future.

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20 **Offered Amendments:** None

21 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 7:19:00 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara De Lucca	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Barbara De Lucca, President at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hawaii and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The research conducted through HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH, which includes the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES), is crucial for the Hispanic community in Hawaii for several reasons:

1. Health Equity: The study aims to understand the health effects of the 2023 Maui wildfires on a diverse group of individuals, including the Hispanic community. By examining how different populations have been impacted, it can shed light on potential health disparities and inequities that may exist, allowing for targeted interventions to address these issues.

2. Community Well-Being: Wildfires can have far-reaching consequences on the well-being of affected communities, including physical and mental health. Understanding these effects is vital for providing appropriate support and resources to the Hispanic community and ensuring their recovery.

3. Future Preparedness: The insights gained from this research can inform future disaster preparedness and response strategies. This knowledge is particularly important for minority communities like the Hispanic population, as they may face unique challenges and vulnerabilities during disasters.

4. Inclusive Policy: Research outcomes can lead to the development of more inclusive and effective policies that consider the specific needs and concerns of the Hispanic community in Hawaii. This can result in better healthcare access, disaster preparedness, and recovery support tailored to their requirements.

In summary, this research is essential for the Hispanic community in Hawaii to promote health equity, enhance community resilience, and ensure that their unique needs and challenges are recognized and addressed in disaster-related policies and interventions.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Barbara De Lucca

Mililani, HI 96789

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:45:51 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Ellison	Malama Kula	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kyle Ellison, Executive Director of Mālama Kula, and a resident who lives in the Kula burn zone, where the fire started right behind my house.

I am in strong support of HB 2805—RELATING TO HEALTH, as it will provide our community with critical data on the long term health effects of these devastating fires.

Unlike Lāhainā, where much of the burn zone was closed off to residents in the weeks and months after the fire, residents in Kula never left their homes, and children, kupuna, parents, and families were exposed to harmful effects of lead, arsenic, zinc, antimony, and numerous VOCs.

Preliminary wipe testings, soil testing, and ash testing has consistently shown elevated levels of lead, which the Hawaii DOH has acknowledged is a potential health threat—particularly to children near the burn zone.

This funding would allow the study to expand to include more vulnerable areas of our population, and it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Kyle Ellison

Kula, 96790



Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Representative Mahina Popoe, Vice Chair

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Representative Amy Perruso, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Date: January 31, 2024
From: Hawaii Medical Association
Beth England MD, Chair- HMA Public Policy Committee

RE HB 2805 Relating to Health - UHERO; Multiethnic Cohort Study; Maui Wildfires; Appropriation; General Fund Expenditure Ceiling Exceeded Position: Support

This measure would appropriate moneys for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires and declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025.

The Maui Wildfire Exposure Cohort Study (MauiWES) addresses a critical gap in knowledge about the effects of environmental hazards and socioeconomic challenges on the health of those affected by the wildfires. The data that includes biospecimens from over 1000 residents impacted by the wildfires will provide vital insights into the short- and long-term health outcomes such as chronic diseases, mental health issues, and the broader social implications.

Beyond the immediate analysis to address the current crisis, the study will inform preventative strategies and improve future disaster response, prioritizing health and well-being in the wake of natural disasters. We urge our lawmakers to support this study for a strong Maui recovery as well as Hawaii crisis mitigation and management in the future.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify on this issue.

Continued

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Beth England, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

REFERENCES, QUICK LINKS:

The Maui Wildfire Exposure Study. University of Hawaii and UH Economics Research Organization UHERO. <https://www.mauiwes.info/> Accessed Jan 29, 2024.

Maui Strong. Hawaii Community Foundation. <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/home> Accessed Jan 29, 2024.

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Beth England, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director



January 30, 2024

To: Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION &
TECHNOLOGY

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Hrg: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

HPHA is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** of HB 2805 for state funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, January 31, 2024 – 2:00 PM Conference Room 309

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2805, Relating to Health

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education, and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association in Hawai'i and across the nation is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

The American Lung Association strongly supports House Bill 2805, HD1, relating to health. The bill appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The importance of the information provided by the study in this bill cannot be overstated. As over 2,200 structures burned in Lahaina and Kula on August 8, 2023, many people across Maui County, including people on the islands of Moloka'i and Lāna'i, were exposed to a multitude of possible toxic elements that can cause serious disease. The Hawai'i State Department of Health reported elevated levels of arsenic, lead, antimony, cobalt, and copper in wildfire ash collected in Maui¹. Many of these chemicals are known carcinogens that can cause deadly forms of cancer, including lung cancer, the number one cancer killer of men and women in Hawai'i, as well as a multitude of other lung diseases.²

The funding provided in HB 2805 will ensure that we are able to determine the long-term impacts of the Maui wildfires. Having this type of study is a hard lesson learned after the attack on the World Trade Center, where hundreds have since died of exposure to the toxic substances that burned on September 11, 2001, in New York City. Studies have shown that many people have died of lung and other cancers after being exposed to the dangerous fumes after the 9/11 attacks³.

¹ <https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/lahaina-ash-characterization-testing-show-elevated-levels-of-toxic-substances/>

² NTP (National Toxicology Program). 2021. Report on Carcinogens, Fifteenth Edition. Research Triangle Park, NC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. <https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/go/roc15> (EndNote XML)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22427/NTP-OTHER-1003>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. World Trade Center Health Program. <https://www.cdc.gov/wtc/atag glance.html>

The American Lung Association in Hawai'i supports amending HB 2805 to include a registry of all affected from the Maui wildfires for longitudinal tracking. This will be in addition to the multi-ethnic cohort study and will keep accurate recording of the people impacted by the fires, even if they don't participate in the study. The registry is modeled after the registry created after the World Trade Center attack to account for the various people and diseases that developed after that catastrophic event.

We humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

With gratitude,

Pedro Haro
Executive Director
American Lung Association in Hawai'i
pedro.haro@lung.org

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:33:43 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dayna Moore	Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E.S. Hui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

Aloha, and mahalo for this opportunity to share how the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study can benefit Maui. My name is Dayna Moore. I am submitting testimony on behalf of Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E.S. Hui which is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I am kanaka maoli and a nurse. I was born and raised on Maui where my roots are. Maui is the only home I've known. I am also testifying on behalf of Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E.S. Hui, an active arm of Hawai'i Community Health & Safety Alliance, which has been active in critical pandemic and fires response. I've been involved in assisting Dr. Pang of Maui District Health Office in the re-entry process giving PPE, education, and doing mental health screenings for Lahaina.

Our hui is a Hawai'i based, non-profit bridging community members and leaders in Health Advocacy, Resources, Education, and Support. We contribute to health equity by identifying needs among many populations, including Kanaka Maoli, Asian Pacific Islanders and underserved segments of the population. We actively respond to the fire disaster on Maui by coordinating between subject-matter experts, licensed healthcare professionals, multiple non-profit relief programs, and community-based organizations on Maui, in Hawai'i and from the mainland. Our mission is to work together with community partners and Hawai'i leadership to educate, advocate, innovate, and take actions to promote health and the well-being of Hawai'i communities.

Advocacy for the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study is supported broadly across the health community. The data collected by the UHERO team and partners can be used by local organizations, healthcare providers, health advocates, leaders, and policy makers.

This data will inform decision-makers and help direct resources to improve supports and systems that serve our kanaka maoli and members of the community. Early warning can alert our Healthcare Providers so that treatment and interventions can be provided.

This opportunity allows for participating individuals who have been affected by our Maui fires to be empowered and active in the care of their health. By supporting the expansion of this study to include first responders, volunteers and workers who are exposed in the burn zones, and especially our keiki, we have an opportunity to impact future generations in perpetuity. Our hui supports this work and is actively involved in creating locally sustainable solutions. We are highly concerned about exposure to toxins from the fires which will impact the long-term health of our people and our environment.

The research to be done has a potential to be used as a model nationally, making Hawai'i a leader in effective response to large scale disasters which affects keiki education and well-being, public health, and socioeconomics and creates impacts from trauma, lack of stable housing, and limited access to timely and comprehensive healthcare and mental health support..

Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E.S. Hui is honored to support the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study and is humbly asking for your support in passing HB 2805 - RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding. Our hui is dedicated to helping Maui nei throughout our long-term recovery.

Mahalo for your time and our hui is sending aloha to all who are impacted by the Maui fires.

Sincerely,

Dayna Moore, BSN, LPN

Executive Director - Hawai'i Health C.A.R.E.S. Hui

Maui, Hawai'i

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 6:05:58 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruben Juarez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

I'm Ruben Juarez, and I strongly endorse HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This bill supports the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and its partners in conducting the MauiWES study to evaluate the social and health impacts of those affected by the 2023 Maui wildfires. It will provide vital information for the State, local organizations, and future policymakers to address immediate community needs, guide long-term recovery efforts, and enhance future disaster preparedness planning.

Supporting MauiWES (Maui Wildfire Exposure Study) should be of utmost importance for the state legislature. The devastating wildfires in Maui have had lasting effects on the affected participants, their communities, and the environment. By endorsing MauiWES, the legislature can play a crucial role in aiding the recovery process. This study not only examines environmental exposures but also focuses on the short and long-term health and well-being of those impacted. The information and insights gained from this research will not only help us better comprehend the long-term consequences of wildfires but will also aid in formulating more effective policies and strategies to mitigate future disasters. Furthermore, MauiWES is a collaborative effort involving many community partners who have been providing invaluable support since the wildfire outbreak. By supporting this initiative, the legislature can demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of its constituents and the resilience of the Maui community, ensuring a faster and more efficient recovery for everyone.

I kindly request your support in passing HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Ruben Juarez

Honolulu HI 96826

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 6:11:25 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Summer Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Summer Lee and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

There is much work to do in Lahaina but in order to make effective and lasting positive rebuilding efforts, data is needed to prioritize resources. I believe UHERO and its partners are key to this success.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Summer Lee

Honolulu, 96822

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 6:31:03 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alika Maunakea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Alika Maunakea and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

As a Native Hawaiian biomedical researcher, I have been leading various efforts including this Wildfire Exposure Study, to better understand and address health disparities among our most vulnerable populations such as Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. I know first-hand that the state lacks crucial data on how environmental hazards left in the wake of the Maui wildfires impact the health and well-being of those exposed in the short- and long-term. This bill will go a long way to support collection of this data, which will be useful to federal, state, and local agencies, including community-based organizations, in shaping policies/practices to mitigate adverse short- and long-term health impacts on the exposed population. Such preventative measures will reduce the long-term health care costs and other social burdens associated with higher risks of morbidity and mortality among wildfire-exposed individuals that are otherwise inevitable. Without this study, we will remain blind to the short- and long-term challenges the Maui community faces over the road to recovery, and be ill-prepared to mitigate health risk of those exposed to any future disasters of a similar scale. This study should not just be a priority for researchers like myself, it should be a priority for the state who are ultimately responsible for the health and well-being of its diverse population.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Alika Maunakea

Honolulu, HI 96826

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 6:46:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Quan Zhang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support for HB 2805 – A Vital Step Towards Understanding Post-Disaster Health Effects

Dear Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, and Kapela,

My name is Quan Zhang, though you may address me as Kyle. I am currently a first-year Ph.D. student in Economics at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and I am writing to express my **STRONG SUPPORT for HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH**. This bill, which advocates for the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners to undertake a multiethnic cohort study on the devastating impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires, holds a deeply personal resonance for me.

As someone hailing from Tangshan, China, a city that was profoundly affected by the catastrophic earthquake in 1976, the urgency and necessity of this bill strike a chord in my heart. The earthquake in my hometown claimed approximately 240,000 lives. Both of my parents were adults during that tragic time. Unfortunately, due to the limited national resources and lack of advanced knowledge at the time, there was no expert guidance on post-disaster health management. In the aftermath, airplanes dispersed disinfectants to prevent the spread of potential plagues. However, this action inadvertently harmed the respiratory systems of many, including my family. My father tragically succumbed to lung cancer in 2018, and my mother suffers from interstitial pneumonia and pulmonary fibrosis. Many from their generation now battle respiratory ailments due to the insufficient post-disaster scientific response back then.

The tragic Maui wildfires last year reignited these painful memories and highlighted the importance of advanced, well-informed post-disaster health management. In today’s world, where technology and scientific knowledge are far more advanced, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to learn from past oversights. By supporting HB 2805, we are taking a significant step towards providing invaluable data and insights that can shape future disaster preparedness and recovery efforts, particularly concerning the health and well-being of affected populations.

This bill is not just a legislative measure; it is a beacon of hope. It represents an opportunity to contribute significantly to the global understanding of post-disaster health management. By conducting this vital research, we are not only supporting the people of Hawaii in their recovery

and preparedness efforts but also enriching the global repository of knowledge on disaster-related health impacts.

In conclusion, I implore the committee to consider the profound implications of HB 2805. This research is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a lifeline for present and future generations who may face similar challenges. Let us honor the legacy of those we have lost by ensuring a healthier, better-prepared, and more resilient society.

Sincerely,

Quan "Kyle" Zhang

Ph.D. Student, Economics

University of Hawaii at Manoa

Honolulu, HI 96822

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 9:30:15 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 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 Pintor

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 11:40:41 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krit Phankitnirundorn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Krit Phankitnirundorn and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

This research aims to deepen our comprehension of the enduring physical and psychological impacts that this tragic incident has on community members. Furthermore, it seeks to underscore the significant role that local organizations play in conducting research that is often more impactful and contextually relevant than broader, less targeted studies. Additionally, this study will illuminate the nuances of the incident, fostering a better understanding that could inform and improve preparedness for future events of a similar nature.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Krit Phankitnirundorn

Honolulu, 96826

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:44:32 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
A TORRES	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Amada TORRES and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The health of citizens is of incalculable value, but also the feeling that their needs are met, especially in cases of extreme urgency, such as what happened last August 2023.

Where residents lost, not only material belongings, the lives of their loved ones, they are currently about to lose their trust in humanity and those who represent them.

It is my conviction that we must support those who are experiencing the ravages of this experience and recover their health initially.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Amada TORRES

HONOLULU, 96822

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:26:43 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samia Dutra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Samia Dutra and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

As a nurse professor working in Hawaii, I have been witnessing the effects of the Maui wildfires. Peer nurses in Maui who are currently my students report the heavy emotional weight while performing their day-to-day healthcare services. The bill brings the opportunity for connection

and support. Participation in the research opens doors for future initiatives, attention, and referrals towards needed services.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Samia Dutra

Honolulu, 96822

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:38:17 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nina Allan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Nina and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

In a world with ever increasing climate challenges and disasters, it is important that we take steps to understand the aftermath. A better understanding on the health effects of disasters will help future responses to provide compassionate care without further adding to people's trauma. The people of Maui need to know that they can depend on the rest of the state for help now and in the future, because disaster recovery does not end when destroyed buildings are replaced.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Nina Allan

Honolulu, 96817

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:52:43 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Au	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Cynthia Au and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

It is vital to study and collect data on both long and short term effects of from the fire and the health impact it will pose on generations to come.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Au

Honolulu, 96814

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 10:00:44 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
daniel skaf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

First, thank you for hearing about bill HB2805 relating to the health of the Maui Wildfire survivors of 2023.

I FULLY SUPPORT this bill and appropriation of moneys for the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization to conduct a multiethnic cohort study regarding the 2023 Maui wildfires.

This people have suffered so much and on top of all that, to be deprived of understanding how the fires have been or will affect them not only physically but also mentally, would be too much for them to suffer.

Please support the HB2805 to fund this very important research.

Thank you,

Daniel Sklaf

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 10:33:23 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keisa Liu	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Chairs Ichiyama & Perruso and Vice Chairs Poepoe & Kapela,

My name is Keisa Liu, and I am writing in strong support for HB2085 Relating to Health. As a resident of Makawao on Maui, I have experienced firsthand the devastating impact of wildfires on our community. This bill is a crucial step toward addressing the health implications of such events.

During the Olinda fire, just a few miles above our neighborhood, I anxiously watched as the flames threatened our area. I made my grandparents sit in their car with their go-bags for hours, fearing for their safety. The prospect of losing my papa due to a fall while we were evacuating was a constant worry. Luckily, the fires never reached our home.

The impact of the fires extended beyond the burn zones, affecting those of us right outside the immediate danger area. Every night, the smoke in the air settled at ground level, infiltrating our bedrooms as we slept. I started waking up with a sore throat in the morning. To cope, we learned to close our windows at night. But I still worried about my six-year-old son. It became evident that the air was unsafe for us, and ignoring this reality posed severe consequences for our community.

I started working in Lahaina within the first few days after the fire. Having witnessed the challenges faced by first responders, doctors, nurses, and police officers during the Lahaina fires, I became acutely aware of the lack of protective measures. I saw many working tirelessly without masks in dangerously thick air saturated with the smell of burning plastic. Even with a P100 mask during my work in re-entry, I could taste the plastic, highlighting the urgency of addressing air quality issues.

After the fires, I joined various organizations, such as Maui Medics Healers Hui and Maui Search and Rescue, and obtained Wilderness First Aid certification. Additionally, I became a Wildfire Home Assessor through Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization. This journey allowed me to understand that the risks persist due to introduced grasses, global warming, and a lack (and historically, need) of local education about wildfire resilience. Significantly, this issue extends beyond Maui; it impacts all islands in our state.

Funding a comprehensive study like MauiWES is essential, as proposed in HB2085. This initiative would enable us to proactively understand the effects of wildfires on our health,

community, and environment. We can better prepare and protect ourselves by gaining insights into the causes and consequences, ensuring our islands' safer and more resilient future.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. I urge you to support HB2085 for the well-being of our community and the broader state of Hawai'i.

Warmly,

Keisa Liu

TO: House Committee on Water & Land
Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, January 31, 2024
TIME: 2:00 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2805, RELATING TO HEALTH

Dear Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela and Members of the Committees,

My name is Cynthia J. Goto, and I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2805, relating to health. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Environmental Health states that public health disaster studies help identify associations between disaster-related exposures and mortality or morbidity. Understanding the adverse health effects of disasters provides situational awareness and provides timely and accurate health information for decision-makers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Cynthia J. Goto

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 12:17:05 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Noelani Ahia and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

I am the founder of the Maui Medic Healers Hui and we are one of the community partner organizations on the frontline of care for Fire Survivors. We have known from the early days after the fire that data collection would be a critical tool for creating effective treatment protocols for our community. There were so many questions early on about what the community, ourselves included, were being exposed to and how illness might manifest as a result. This study not only provides data for researchers but for the individuals themselves so they can make informed decisions about their healthcare. It will also help us understand health inequities in our communities in order to effectively respond.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Me ke aloha,

Noelani Ahia

Wailuku, HI

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:07:47 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sydney Campbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

RE: Strong Support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH.

Hrg: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 309

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Sydney Campbell and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and

partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

This research is important to me because I believe that interdisciplinary and community-oriented research is crucial for disaster preparedness. The risk of natural hazards is projected to increase in the presence of climate change, and research is one of our best tools to understand our vulnerabilities to hazards. Research-informed policies are our best shot at mitigating disaster, and in the wake of the 2023 Maui Wildfires, researchers are presented with a valuable opportunity which should be supported by HB 2805.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Sydney Campbell

Honolulu, 96815

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:09:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 – The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

This is what needed to happen directly after the Red Hill fuel spill that contaminated the Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hawaii water distribution System on November 21, 2021.

Over 96,000 people were affected. These people are still suffering from the effects of their poisoning. Exposure dermal, inhalation and ingestion needed to be addressed and there is talk about a registry that will take 2 years to be ready.

Please let's not do this to Lahaina or Kula! We need to be proactive and act now. Kapuna, children, pregnant women, babies on formula (water + formula), weak immune system, just to name a few.

Let's not wait for 10 years to start seeing the chronic, long term effects. Starting now will help identify acute needs.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:50:38 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Sanchez-Johnsen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Lisa Sanchez-Johnsen and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2805 – **RELATING TO HEALTH**. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

This research is critically important to better understand the effects of the Maui wildfires on the health of the people of Maui. As a clinical psychologist and researcher, I am fully supportive of programs that aim to understand how to improve the physical and mental health of individuals and groups and strongly believe that this program is a critical step in improving the health and wellness of people on Maui and beyond. As someone who was involved on Maui and helping to provide psychological support in the week after the fires, I have witnessed firsthand how important it is to assist the efforts on Maui.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** and pass **HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH** for state funding.

Sincerely,

Lisa Sanchez-Johnsen

Honolulu, 96815

Date: January 30, 2024

To: Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Members of the Committees on Water & Land, and on Higher Education & Technology

Subject: HB 2805 — Relating to Health

My name is Carl Bonham, I am the Executive Director of UHERO, and a Professor of Economics at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the College of Social Sciences, I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 2805 Relating to Health. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai‘i.

I strongly support HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This bill supports collaboration between UHERO, the College of Social Sciences Health Policy Initiative, and the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the UH Cancer Center, and numerous community-based organizations to conduct a comprehensive study of health and social impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires. The study will establish a registry of individuals impacted by the wildfires, enabling a thorough assessment of the long-term health and well-being effects on these communities.

This collaboration will provide invaluable information for the State of Hawaii, local organizations, and future policymakers. It will deliver crucial health information to both study participants and those addressing immediate community needs, including community organizations and policy makers. Beyond an examination of environmental exposures, the study concentrates on the health and well-being of those deeply affected individuals. The data and insights derived from this research will not only deepen our understanding of the long-term consequences of wildfires but will also contribute to more effective policies and strategies to mitigate the impact of future disasters.

State support for MauiWES, will extend the study’s viability beyond our initial funding from the Hawaii Community foundation. We have also applied for a competitive federal grant from the National Institutes of Health, and will need support from all parties to make this work a success. This study continues UHERO’s long-standing tradition of public-private partnerships to support research of critical practical significance to the people of Hawaii.

With over twenty-five years of economic and policy research, UHERO has developed a comprehensive and robust data infrastructure. Our public facing data portals and dashboards covers a wide range of topics, from housing trends to employment statistics, and serves as a valuable resource for policymakers and the community daily. Similarly, the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) has successfully established the Hawai‘i All-Payer Claims Database, positioning it as the primary data center in collaboration with various state entities such as the Department of Health, Office of Enterprise Services, and Medicaid (Med-QUEST). The combined efforts of UHERO and SSRI's robust infrastructure will be invaluable for informing and guiding disaster recovery efforts, offering insights and data-driven solutions to aid in the rebuilding process.

MauiWES is a collaborative effort, drawing upon the support and expertise of numerous community partners who have been unwavering in their commitment since the outbreak of the wildfires. By

supporting this initiative, the legislature can demonstrate its unwavering dedication to the well-being of its constituents and the resilience of the Maui community, ultimately ensuring a faster and more efficient recovery for everyone involved.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH to secure state funding for this pivotal research partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Bonham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Carl Bonham
UHERO Executive Director
Professor, Department of Economics
University of Hawaii at Manoa

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 3:53:33 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brennan Yamamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Brennan Yamamoto and I am in strong support of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. This group has previously partaken in research surrounding Native Hawaiian health and trying to add information surrounding the health disparities NHPI suffer. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

The research conducted by this department can alleviate some of the long term consequences for those affected by the wildfire. The received \$100 incentive is a small bonus in comparison to the health information provided, and potential for long term advice to be given. Furthering our understanding the affects of the wildfire, both short and long-term, in relation to physical and mental health is essential in further serving our communities.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Brennan Yamamoto

Hilo, Hawaii 96720

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:48:49 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ALIKA MAUNAKEA	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Alika Maunakea and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. The bill will support the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization and partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires. In addition, it will provide the State, local organizations, and future policymakers with critical information and data needed to address imminent community needs, inform the long-term recovery process, and support better planning for future disaster preparedness.

As a Native Hawaiian biomedical researcher, I have been leading various efforts including this Wildfire Exposure Study, to better understand and address health disparities among our most vulnerable populations such as Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. I know first-hand that the state lacks crucial data on how environmental hazards left in the wake of the Maui wildfires impact the health and well-being of those exposed in the short- and long-term. This bill will go a long way to support collection of this data, which will be useful to federal, state, and local agencies, including community-based organizations, in shaping policies/practices to mitigate adverse short- and long-term health impacts on the exposed population. Such preventative measures will reduce the long-term health care costs and other social burdens associated with higher risks of morbidity and mortality among wildfire-exposed individuals that are otherwise inevitable. Without this study, we will remain blind to the short- and long-term challenges the Maui community faces over the road to recovery, and be ill-prepared to mitigate health risk of those exposed to any future disasters of a similar scale. This study should not just be a priority for researchers like myself, it should be a priority for the state who are ultimately responsible for the health and well-being of its diverse population.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Alika Maunakea

Honolulu, HI 96826

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:55:50 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RUBEN JUAREZ	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

I'm Ruben Juarez, and I strongly endorse HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This bill supports the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization and its partners in conducting the MauiWES study to evaluate the social and health impacts of those affected by the 2023 Maui wildfires. It will provide vital information for the State, local organizations, and future policymakers to address immediate community needs, guide long-term recovery efforts, and enhance future disaster preparedness planning.

Supporting MauiWES (Maui Wildfire Exposure Study) should be of utmost importance for the state legislature. The devastating wildfires in Maui have had lasting effects on the affected participants, their communities, and the environment. By endorsing MauiWES, the legislature can play a crucial role in aiding the recovery process. This study not only examines environmental exposures but also focuses on the short and long-term health and well-being of those impacted. The information and insights gained from this research will not only help us better comprehend the long-term consequences of wildfires but will also aid in formulating more effective policies and strategies to mitigate future disasters. Furthermore, MauiWES is a collaborative effort involving many community partners who have been providing invaluable support since the wildfire outbreak. By supporting this initiative, the legislature can demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of its constituents and the resilience of the Maui community, ensuring a faster and more efficient recovery for everyone.

I kindly request your support in passing HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH for state funding.

Sincerely,

Ruben Juarez

Honolulu HI 96826

HB-2805

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 7:58:23 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/31/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonas Yee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representatives Ichiyama, Poepoe, Perruso, Kapela,

My name is Jonas Yee, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH. This bill is of great significance as it seeks to allocate funding to the University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization and its partners for a multiethnic cohort study on the effects of the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires.

This research holds importance to me because it will provide critical insights and data that can help our community recover from the profound impact of the Maui wildfires. Understanding the specific needs of our community and ensuring a well-informed recovery process is crucial. Moreover, this study will aid in better preparing for potential future disasters, increasing our overall resilience.

I humbly ask for your support in passing HB 2805 – RELATING TO HEALTH to secure state funding for this vital research initiative.

Sincerely,

Jonas Yee

Kailua Hawai‘i

96734