

Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
House Committee on Water and Land

Tuesday, March 19, 2024
9:30AM, House conference room 430
Hawaii State Capitol

Support for HR9/HCR19

Dear Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Rory Kuwahara and I am a 5th grader at Mililani Mauka Elementary School. I am testifying **in support of** HR9/HCR19.

I have been learning about the importance of native plants since I was a young girl. When the wildfire in the forest above Mililani Mauka started, I was concerned because of all the damage it caused to the native ecosystem. Large pieces of native uluhe fern ash fell around my neighborhood and at school. It looked like it was snowing but black. It made me sad that native plants and habitat for wildlife was burning so close to my home.

In Hawaii, the groundwater system delivers freshwater to everyone's homes. It is charged by the native plants in the mountains. The native plants that were burned by the wildfires could easily be replaced by fast-growing invasive plants. These plants will not contribute to recharging the groundwater supply like the native plants do. So, replanting native plants and weeding out the invasive plants will help make sure there is enough freshwater for our daily use and for future generations.

I hope you will consider passing HR9/HCR19 because I believe it will benefit our community in the present and the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Rory Kuwahara
Mililani Mauka Elementary School