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

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

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

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

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

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

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34 (1) The Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
35 Resources or the Chairperson's designee, who is
36 requested to serve as the chairperson of the Working
37 Group;
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39 (2) The Director of Transportation, or the Director's
40 designee;
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- 1 (3) The Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, or
2 the Chairperson's designee;
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- 4 (4) A representative of the Division of Consumer Advocacy
5 of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs,
6 with experience in matters related to regulated public
7 utilities, to be appointed by the Director of Commerce
8 and Consumer Affairs;
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- 10 (5) A representative of the Hawaii Invasive Species
11 Council;
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- 13 (6) A member of the House of Representatives, to be
14 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
15 Representatives;
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- 17 (7) A member of the Senate, to be appointed by the
18 President of the Senate;
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- 20 (8) The mayor of each county, or the mayor's designee;
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- 22 (9) A representative of a cooperative electric utility;
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- 24 (10) A representative of an investor-owned electric
25 utility;
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- 27 (11) A representative of a telecommunications carrier;
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- 29 (12) A representative of the International Brotherhood of
30 Electrical Workers, Local Union 1260; and
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- 32 (13) A landowner that owns more than one thousand acres of
33 land in the State; and
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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested
36 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
37 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
38 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
39 of 2025; and

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



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

OFFERED BY:



MAR - 8 2024

