



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 10:05 a.m.

By

Brennon Morioka, Dean
College of Engineering

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2502 SD1 – RELATING TO THE GENERATION OF WILDFIRE SUSCEPTIBILITY MAPS FOR HAWAII

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2502 SD1, provided its adoption does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. This measure establishes and appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i to develop wildfire susceptibility and vulnerability maps for the State of Hawai'i.

These maps 1) help identify areas that are more susceptible to wildfire hazard, 2) allow decision-makers to prioritize high-risk areas for targeted risk reduction strategies, and 3) assist in the development of adaptation policies that lessen the disastrous impacts of future wildfires. Decision-makers can use wildfire vulnerability maps to guide zoning regulations to reduce the impact of wildfires on communities. Moreover, authorities will be more informed about policies allowing construction in vulnerable areas and locating essential facilities (e.g., hospitals, schools, and firefighting stations) in areas that are less vulnerable to wildfires.

In collaboration with the National Weather Service, the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources-Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Hawai'i-Emergency Management Agency, and county fire departments, the results of this project will be used to develop the best mitigation strategies such as ecological forest management (fuel reduction to restore to natural conditions), creation of defensible space (using native and/or fire-resistant vegetation), and development of greenbelts (diverse vegetation including trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers, that act as natural buffers to create separation from wildlands) in each county to reduce the impacts of wildfires.

The UH Mānoa (UHM) College of Engineering and UHM Water Resources Research Center's research capabilities, combined with the extensive outreach activities and technical solutions from the UHM College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, will provide the full range of skillsets and research, as well as the climate data necessary to develop this important tool for Hawaii's decision-makers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

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Date: 02/19/24

TO: WAM Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and WAM Committee Members Aquino DeCoite, Hashimoto, Inouye, Kanuha, Kidani, Mercado Kim, Lee, Shimabukuro, Wakai, Fevella

FROM: Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB2502 Relating to the Generation of Wildfire Susceptibility Maps for Hawaii

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support SB2502 Relating to the Generation of Wildfire Susceptibility Maps for Hawaii.

The HFIA believes that while addressing the actionable root(s) of the issue regarding wildfires (via vegetation management, improvement of soil health, installation and maintenance of fire breaks, etc.) is needed in the immediate future and ongoing over the long term, preparing for wildfires in ways such as that outlined in SB2502 are also important and need to be acted upon. Creating maps to identify which communities, landscapes, buildings, and infrastructure are most vulnerable to future wildfires will allow us to most optimally put our resources toward protecting and mitigating fire in those areas first while we build the capacity to apply mitigation and preparedness techniques and efforts more robustly across the State.

We hope that you will support SB2502.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Guy Cellier, President
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: President Guy Cellier, Vice President Irene Sprecher, Secretary Taylor Coons, Treasurer Wade Lee
Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Aaron Hammer, Nicholas Koch, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 225
Thursday, February 22, 2024, 10:05 A.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Ways and Means

**COMMENTS on SB2502 RELATING TO THE GENERATION OF WILDFIRE SUSCEPTIBILITY
MAPS FOR HAWAII**

The Maui Chamber of Commerce would like to **COMMENT on SB2502**.

The Chamber supports and appreciates the University of Hawaii doing this project as it builds capacity and workforce in our state. However, we feel that the state should also explore private partners, who may be best skilled with previous experience and/or create university/private partnerships to accomplish this goal.

We would like to suggest that this effort and the effort in SB2284 (relating to a wildfire forecast system for Hawaii) be combined.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer **COMMENTS on SB2502**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.