

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Friday, February 9, 2024

9:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

With Comments

Senate Bill No. 3344, Relating to Wildfires

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

The Office of the Governor offers the following comments on S.B. No. 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

S.B. No. 3344 establishes the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and would appropriate funding.

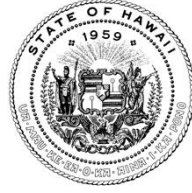
The Maui wildfire resulted in unbearable loss of lives, homes, infrastructure, and businesses. This tragic event is a wake-up call that due to climate changes, the risk of catastrophic wildfires, along with other natural disasters in Hawaii has increased.

The Office of the Governor sees this proposal as one of a few important pieces of legislation that needs to be explored as our state figures out how to stabilize our electric utility and our energy future. The bill proposes to establish a fund that the state, the electric utility, telecom companies and private landowners may contribute to a relief fund that would then potentially cover future claims arising out of a catastrophic future wildfire.

While the Office of the Governor is open to this concept, we do not feel like there is sufficient detail in this proposal, and do not currently see a full comprehensive package from the electric utility on how to resolve past claims before we believe it would be prudent for the state to commit to an approach on future claims.

Therefore, we cannot support this bill currently. However, we do not oppose this bill moving forward so that we may continue our discussions with the electric utility and other key affected stakeholders.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
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NADINE Y. ANDO
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DEAN I HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, February 9, 2024
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

On the following measure:
S.B. 3344, RELATING TO WILDFIRES.

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nadine Ando and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("Department") The Department offers comments on this bill.

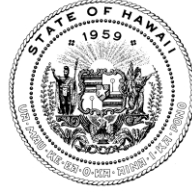
The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage claims resulting from future catastrophic wildfires. The devastating effects of the Maui wildfires have highlighted the urgent need to address the increased risks associated with climate change in our region. We appreciate the gravity of the situation and the importance of finding sustainable solutions to safeguard lives, homes, and businesses in the future.

Although the Department acknowledges the importance of planning for and mitigating the impacts of catastrophic wildfires and are open to the concept of establishing a relief fund that would be housed within the Department, we would like to

express our reservations and concerns regarding the current proposal set forth in S.B. 3344.

The proposed Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation as outlined in the bill will be charged with administering fund contributions that may come from the State, electric utilities, public utilities that contribute to the risk or severity of a catastrophic wildfire, other government entities and private landowners who own at least 1,000 acres in Hawai'i. The purpose of the wildfire relief fund is to process eligible claims for property damage resulting from future catastrophic wildfires. Notably, however, the current proposal does not address the means or the mechanisms to compensate for claims of property damage arising out of the recent devastating Maui wildfires. The Department believes that a more comprehensive proposal from key stakeholders such as the electric utility, is needed to better assess the feasibility and effectiveness of any proposed measure relating to property damage compensation and risk exposure.

The Department remains committed to contributing constructively to the development of legislation that ensures the safety and well-being of our communities and is grateful for the opportunity to offer comments on this bill.



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9:30 a.m.
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On the following measure:
S.B. 3344, RELATING TO WILDFIRES

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

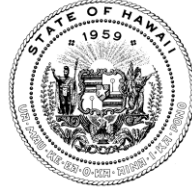
My name is Gordon Ito, and I am the Insurance Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Insurance Division. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and appropriate funds.

We note that the programs proposed in this bill may fall within the definition of insurance as defined in Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) chapter 431 (Insurance Code), and accordingly may be subject to various provisions within chapter 431, including but not limited to Insurers General Requirements (article 3), Domestic Insurers (article 4), Financial Condition (article 5), and Rate Regulation (article 14). If the intent of the bill is not to create programs subject to insurance regulations, we respectfully suggest the bill

be amended to clearly exempt the programs proposed by this bill from regulation under the Insurance Code.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the bill.



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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, February 9, 2024
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 3344, RELATING TO WILDFIRES**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Angelo, and I am the Executive Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Division of Consumer Advocacy (DCA). The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and appropriates funds.

The Maui wildfire resulted in tragic losses of life, personal injuries, and property damage. The pain of that tragedy will be felt for generations. We must take decisive action to eliminate the possibility of such tragic outcomes from recurring by focusing on mitigating the risks from natural hazards.

This bill proposes establishing a fund that the state, electric utilities, public utilities that contribute to the risk of occurrence or severity of a catastrophic wildfire, other government entities, and private landowners may participate in. The money within the

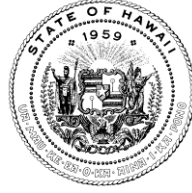
fund would then potentially cover future claims related to property damage arising out of a future catastrophic wildfire.

While the Department appreciates that this proposal seeks to address the stability of the investor-owned electric utility, the Department has significant concerns about this bill in its current form. Most prominently, this bill requires that an investor-owned utility's contributions shall be recovered from its customers in rate increases unless the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) finds that imprudent conduct by the investor-owned utility caused the catastrophic wildfire.

The DCA believes that the burden of this financial risk for property damage resulting from the actions or inaction (except for conduct found to be imprudent by the Commission) or systems of investor-owned utilities should not summarily be placed upon its customers as opposed to its shareholders.

Therefore, the Department cannot support this bill in its current form. However, we do not oppose this bill moving forward so that discussions with the key affected stakeholders may continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, February 9, 2024
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 3344, RELATING TO WILDFIRES**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Denise Balanay, and I am the Senior Hearings Officer of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to establish the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and to appropriate funds.

Section -17 (Hearings and appeals of determinations) sets forth a procedure for affected persons or entities to request an administrative or contested case hearing on determinations made by the wildfire relief fund administrator or board. Should this measure be enacted, the OAH respectfully requests the following amendments:

- Subsection (a), page 39, lines 19 through 20: "may request ~~[a review and]~~ a contested case hearing on that determination before the department of commerce and consumer affairs[-] , pursuant to chapter 91." This

- amendment would clarify the type of hearing contemplated by this bill and the statutory authority for the request for hearing.
- Subsection (b), page 40, lines 1 through 8: “Upon receipt of a request for ~~[review of]~~ hearing on the administrator or board’s determination, ~~[the department of commerce and consumer affairs shall refer the request for hearing to the office of administrative hearings for determination as expeditiously as possible. A hearing shall be scheduled for a date no more]~~ the office of administrative hearings shall schedule a hearing date no later than days after its receipt ~~[by the department of commerce and consumer affairs]~~ of the request for [a] hearing.” Since subsection (b) seeks an administrative determination “as expeditiously as possible,” this amendment would allow the affected person or entity to request a hearing directly with the OAH.
 - Subsection (c), page 40, lines 9 through 14: “Following the conclusion of any hearing or prior to the conclusion of the hearing, with the concurrence of the parties, the office of administrative hearings shall promptly, and no later than days after the hearing, decide the matter and ~~[make an order]~~ issue findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a decision in accordance with the ~~[administrative judge’s decision.]~~ hearings officer’s determination.” This amendment would conform with the verbiage in Hawaii Revised Statutes chapter 91 and Hawaii Administrative Rules title 16, chapter 201 (Administrative Practice and Procedure).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

TESTIMONY OF
LEODOLOFF R. ASUNCION, JR.
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF HAWAII

TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

February 9, 2024
9:30 a.m.

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

MEASURE: S.B. No. 3344

TITLE: RELATING TO WILDFIRES.

DESCRIPTION: Establishes the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State. Appropriates funds.

POSITION:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") offers the following comments for consideration.

COMMENTS:

The Commission appreciates the intent of this measure to mitigate the effects of a catastrophic wildfire in Hawaii by establishing a wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in Hawaii.

The Commission presently regulates both investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities. The Commission notes that in the current draft of this measure both investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities may participate in the wildfire relief fund as contributors but differ with respect to: (1) whether their contributions shall be recovered from their customers in rates; and (2) in the evaluation of the prudence of their conduct should a catastrophic wildfire be ignited by their facilities. Given that both investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities are regulated by the Commission and that the primary difference between investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities is their ownership structures, which have little to no bearing on the amount of risk associated with a

catastrophic wildfire, should the Legislature intend to move this measure forward, the Commission suggests that this measure be amended such that there is conformity between investor-owned utilities and cooperative utilities with respect to whether their contributions may be recovered from their customers in rates and in the evaluation of the prudence of their conduct should a catastrophic wildfire have been ignited by the public utilities facilities.

The Commission further notes that as written this measure would create, in any Commission proceeding to evaluate the prudence of an investor-owned utility's conduct if a catastrophic wildfire may have been ignited by the facilities of an investor-owned utility, a presumption that an investor-owned utility's conduct will be deemed to be prudent if an investor-owned utility has a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the Commission. Such a presumption may not be warranted if the investor-owned utility's facilities may have ignited a catastrophic wildfire, and the removal of such a presumption would not impair or limit the investor-owned utility's ability to present evidence that its conduct was prudent.

Consistent with the Commission's comments above, the Commission offers the following amendments to:

Page 22, Line 17

(k) Utility contribution. ~~An investor-owned~~ A public utility's contributions to the wildfire relief fund, including initial and supplemental contributions, ~~shall~~ may be recovered from its customers in rates, unless the public utilities commission directs otherwise pursuant to section -9.

Page 23, Line 27 to Page 27, Line 18

§ -9 Replenishment of the wildfire relief fund; determination of prudence. (a) If the administrator, or an agency of the State with responsibility for determining the causes of wildfires, informs the public utilities commission that a catastrophic wildfire may have been ignited by the facilities of ~~an investor-owned~~ a public utility that is a contributor, the public utilities commission shall initiate a proceeding to review the

~~investor-owned~~ public utility's conduct leading to the catastrophic wildfire and make findings. The public utilities commission may, even without formal notice from the administrator or the agency, initiate this proceeding of its own accord.

(b) The public utilities commission shall evaluate the prudence of the conduct of the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility in connection with a catastrophic wildfire as follows:

~~(1) If the investor-utility has a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the public utilities commission, the investor-utility's conduct will be deemed to have been prudent, unless a party to the proceeding creates a serious doubt as to the prudence of the investor-owned utility's conduct; or~~

~~(2) If the investor- public utility does not have a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the public utilities commission, or if the public utilities commission determines that the presumption is overcome,~~

(1) The public utilities commission shall determine whether the public utility acted prudently, considering only acts that may have caused the ignition and evaluating the public utility's actions in the context of the public utility's overall systems, processes and programs, such that an error by a public utility employee would not be a basis for a finding of imprudence, unless that error was the result of an imprudent system, process, or program.

(c) In evaluating prudence under this section, the public utilities commission shall determine whether the actions of the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility were consistent with actions that a reasonable public utility would have undertaken in good faith under similar circumstances, at the relevant point in time, and based on the information available to the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility at the relevant point in time.

Reasonable conduct shall not be limited to the optimum practice, method, or act to the exclusion of others, but rather shall encompass a spectrum of possible practices, methods, or acts consistent with utility system needs, the

interest of ratepayers, and the requirements of governmental agencies of competent jurisdiction.

(d) If the public utilities commission determines that imprudent conduct by the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility caused the catastrophic wildfire, the public utilities commission shall determine whether to order the public utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in whole or in part for payments from the fund made in connection with the catastrophic wildfire. In determining the amount of reimbursement, if any, the public utilities commission shall consider the extent and severity of the public utility's imprudence and factors within and beyond the public utility's control that may have led to or exacerbated the costs from the catastrophic wildfire, including but not limited to humidity, temperature, winds, fuel, merged wildfires with independent ignitions, third-party actions that affected the spread of the wildfire, and fire suppression activities.

(e) The public utilities commission shall not order the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in an amount that exceeds the lesser of:

- (1) The costs that the public utilities commission determines were due to the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility's imprudence; or
- (2) Twenty per cent of the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility's transmission and distribution equity rate base minus the amounts the public utility has reimbursed, or is required to reimburse, the wildfire relief fund during the period of three consecutive calendar years ending on December 31 of the year in which the calculation is being performed.

(f) If the public utilities commission orders the ~~investor-owned~~ public utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund, the public utility shall not recover the amount of the reimbursement in rates charged to ratepayers.

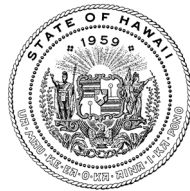
(g) If the administrator, or an agency of the State with responsibility for determining the causes of wildfires or other catastrophic wildfires concludes that the conduct of a ~~cooperative utility, other~~ a governmental entity, or private landowner that is a contributor may have caused the occurrence or contributed to the severity of a catastrophic wildfire, the administrator shall assess the prudence of

the contributor's conduct, applying the same standard of prudence applied to ~~investor-owned~~ public utilities pursuant to subsection (c).

(h) If the administrator determines that the contributor acted imprudently and that such imprudence caused or contributed to the severity of the catastrophic wildfire, the administrator shall recommend that the board require such contributor to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in whole or in part for payments that the fund made in connection with the catastrophic wildfire, considering the factors set forth in subsection (d), subject to a cap of ten per cent of the contributor's assets within Hawaii, measured over a rolling three-year period.

Further, the Commission observes that it is hard to determine whether the limitations on reimbursement provided in section - 9 (d) are appropriate without first understanding the relative contributions to capitalization by different entities. Additionally, the Commission questions whether assessing "only acts that may have caused the ignition", is appropriate, or whether it may also be appropriate to assess whether a public utility contributed to the extent of a wildfire as well. Should the Legislature maintain separate treatment of investor-owned and cooperative utilities, it may be appropriate to designate different relative capitalization amounts under section - 8 (d) (3).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 3344

February 9, 2024
9:30 a.m.
Room 229 and Videoconference

RELATING TO WILDFIRES

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 3344: 1) establishes the Wildfire Relief Fund (WRF) within the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) and outside of the State treasury to hold contributions from participating entities and fund compensation payments for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires; 2) establishes the WRF Corporation within DCCA to administer the WRF; 3) authorizes the Public Utilities Commission to order public utilities to reimburse the WRF for compensation payments if it determines the public utility engaged in imprudent conduct; and 4) appropriates an unspecified amount in FY 25 to seed the new fund.

B&F understands the intent of this measure as it establishes a broad framework to:

1) commission an actuarial study of the capitalization amount of the proposed WRF necessary to manage claims arising from catastrophic wildfires; 2) collect contributions from governmental entities and utilities; and 3) make payments to eligible claimants. B&F is willing to work with its sister departments and agencies and the Legislature to advance the purposes of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



**Hawaiian
Electric**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

Friday, February 9, 2024

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Jason Benn

Senior Vice President Chief Information Officer
Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jason Benn, Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer for Hawaiian Electric and I am testifying **in strong support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires, and requesting amendments as proposed by others included in the attached**. SB 3344 would create a statewide wildfire relief fund to compensate property owners, insurers, and government entities for property damage resulting from future catastrophic wildfires, regardless of who or what caused them. As we so painfully learned on August 8, 2023, the impacts of climate change, combined with the changing uses of land in Hawaii, are creating a whole-of-society problem. SB 3344 is part of that whole-of-society solution.

I want to be clear that this measure – and the other measures Hawaiian Electric has proposed that will be considered by this committee – does not contemplate a financial bailout for the company related to the Maui wildfires. These measures are forward-looking, about working to prevent something terrible like this from ever

happening again and to provide additional financial protection for everyone in the unlikely event of a future catastrophic wildfire. This legislation will also help strengthen the financial standing of Hawaiian Electric, enabling it to continue serving the energy needs of Hawaii as it has done since 1891.

I want to emphasize that SB 3344 does not apply to claims arising from the August 8 event. Rather, it is intended to help protect the people of Hawaii and our economy by providing compensation for property damage should another catastrophic wildfire occur in the future. In short, if passed SB 3344 would:

- Provide expedited compensation to property owners for uninsured losses—with no up-front out of pocket costs, and without the need for time-consuming, costly, and uncertain litigation.
- Provide compensation to state and local governments for losses, including the costs of fire suppression and damage to infrastructure.
- Reimburse property insurers a percentage of their payments to their policyholders. Again, this would be accomplished through an expedited, low-cost, non-litigation process.

Other noteworthy features of SB 3344 include:

- The fund would pay regardless of the cause. If a fire is caused by arson, fireworks, trash fires or natural events, or where a fire cannot be legally attributed to a financially capable party, property owners have no recourse to recover their uninsured losses. This bill seeks to address that, while also eliminating costly and lengthy litigation.
- Contributors to the Fund would be the State, electric utilities, large landowners, and counties, if those entities voluntarily choose to participate.
- Beneficiaries who chose to participate, such as property owners and property insurers, would not be able to sue those who contribute to the Fund. Contributors, for their part, would provide funds available to compensate beneficiaries no matter the cause of a catastrophic fire—pooling their resources to provide a financial backstop regardless of fault. At the same time, the bill includes a process to hold contributors accountable if they are found to have caused or contributed to the spread of fire, by means of a reimbursement to the fund.

- All property owners that do not opt out of the program via their annual property tax assessment would be participants. That feature makes it possible for the Fund to cover all catastrophic wildfires regardless of fault.

The Fund not only provides compensation to property owners and insurers; it also helps the State and individuals avoid the costs and burdens of litigation, as well as the financial instability that can result from litigation due to catastrophic wildfires. The State has a strong interest in avoiding that outcome. Electric utilities, for example, invest hundreds of millions of dollars every year in our State to help achieve its energy policy objectives. These include renewable energy, decarbonization, resilience and the availability of safe, reliable, and secure service to our customers, including other critical infrastructure providers, such as hospitals and the Department of Defense. Furthermore, the scope of a catastrophic wildfire is the result of a number of factors, including climate change and land management practices, that are not the fault of any single entity. The Fund equitably shares the burden of these factors that can lead to a catastrophic wildfire, promoting the public's interest in ensuring that our critical infrastructure providers, including electric utilities, remain able to raise the capital needed to invest in our State.

In order to continue to be able to make these large upfront investments, the utility must eliminate the financial uncertainty of future wildfire risks and regain access to capital. We believe this bill and investments Hawaiian Electric and others will make to mitigate wildfire risk, will help do so.

There are three amendments we propose to SB 3344 as suggested by others – and detailed in the attached:

1. Exempt wildfire relief fund from regulation under the insurance code (as proposed by the Insurance Commissioner, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs).
2. Authorize the wildfire relief fund administrator/board to issue rules for hearings (as proposed by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs); and
3. Incorporate further amendments regarding cooperatives, other than the proposed deletion of the presumption of prudence (as proposed by KIUC and the Public Utilities Commission).

In summary, SB 3344 provides a low-cost and rapid process to compensate property owners and insurance companies and avoids the uncertainty of litigation that can financially destabilize utilities, large landowners, and government entities. Solving the impacts of climate change on our State must be addressed collectively and collaboratively.

On behalf of the 2,600 employees, 5,200 retirees and the generations of Hawaiian Electric employees who have faithfully served our community for 132 years, mahalo for allowing me to testify in strong support of this important bill.

Please pass SB 3344.

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT

5
6
7 RELATING TO WILDFIRES.

8
9 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

10 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that as the risk of
11 catastrophic wildfires in Hawaii has increased, so has the
12 threat of property damage from such fires. Although most
13 property owners have insurance, some do not, and others'
14 insurance may not fully cover their losses.

15 The legislature further finds that when the cause of a
16 wildfire is uncertain or contested, costly and protracted
17 litigation ensues. Litigation regarding wildfire damages can
18 impose massive costs, including on the State, counties,
19 utilities, landowners, and other defendants that may be alleged
20 to have contributed to catastrophic wildfires. Such costs can
21 overwhelm these major institutions of the community, undermining
22 their ability to make investments that the State needs. Indeed,
23 even the possibility of litigation regarding a future
24 catastrophic wildfire can create a cloud of uncertainty that
25 threatens to impair the ability of these entities to attract
26 capital on reasonable terms--capital that is vital to make
27 investments in wildfire prevention, among other priorities.
28 Such an outcome harms everyone.

1 The legislature also finds that the risk of property damage
2 stemming from catastrophic wildfires may lead property insurers
3 to raise rates or refuse to provide coverage for certain losses,
4 or certain high-risk areas, of Hawaii--as occurred in the wake
5 of hurricane Iniki with respect to hurricanes.

6 The legislature additionally finds that it is in the public
7 interest to take steps to ensure that property insurance remains
8 available to cover losses associated with wildfires by providing
9 benefits to property insurers. Furthermore, the legislature
10 finds that it is in the public interest to ensure that the
11 threat of wildfires does not make investment in Hawaii's public
12 utilities so financially risky that it becomes too costly or
13 impossible for them to raise capital to implement vital plans,
14 including plans to mitigate wildfire risk, and to provide safe,
15 reliable, and affordable service to the people of the State.

16 Moreover, the legislature finds that it is in the public
17 interest to avoid the costs of litigation arising out of
18 catastrophic wildfires in order to protect Hawaii's economy and
19 encourage investment in the State. Therefore, the purpose of
20 this Act is to serve the public interest in the event of a
21 devastating wildfire by establishing a response to provide
22 compensation for property damage resulting from wildfires,
23 regardless of cause.

24 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
25 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
26 as follows:

27
28

1 "CHAPTER

2 WILDFIRE RELIEF FUND

3 § -1 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

4 "Administrator" means the wildfire relief fund
5 administrator appointed pursuant to section -5.

6 "Board" means the wildfire relief fund board of directors
7 created pursuant to section -4.

8 "Catastrophic wildfire" means a wildfire occurring on or
9 after the effective date of this Act that damages or destroys
10 more than five hundred residential or commercial structures.

11 "Contributor" means any person who contributes to the
12 wildfire relief fund as provided in section -3.

13 "Cooperative utility" means a public utility owned by
14 customers and overseen by a board of directors elected by
15 customers.

16 "Corporation" means the wildfire relief fund corporation
17 established pursuant to section -3.

18 "Electric utility" means a public utility that exists for
19 the furnishing of electrical power.

20 "Investor-owned utility" means a public utility that is
21 owned by shareholders and overseen by a board of directors
22 elected by shareholders.

23 "Other governmental entities" refers to governmental
24 entities, including county government agencies, other than state
25 government agencies.

26 "Public utility" has the same meaning as in section 269-1.

27 "Wildfire relief fund" means the wildfire relief fund
28 established pursuant to section -2.

1 "Wildfire risk management plan" means a plan approved by
2 the public utilities commission pursuant to section -9.

3 **§ -2 Wildfire relief fund; establishment.** (a) There is
4 established outside the state treasury a wildfire relief fund
5 and any accounts thereunder to carry out the purposes of this
6 chapter.

7 (b) The wildfire relief fund shall be placed within the
8 department of commerce and consumer affairs for administrative
9 purposes. The fund shall be a public body corporate and politic.

10 (c) Moneys deposited in the wildfire relief fund and any
11 accounts thereunder shall be held by the fund, as trustee, in a
12 depository, as defined in section 38-1, or according to a
13 similar arrangement at the discretion of the board.

14 (d) All moneys received by the wildfire relief fund
15 corporation under this chapter shall be paid immediately to the
16 director of finance and shall become a part of the wildfire
17 relief fund.

18 (e) All payments authorized to be made by the corporation
19 by this chapter, including all payments for claims for
20 catastrophic wildfire damages, all salaries, and all other
21 expenses, shall be made from the wildfire relief fund.

22 (f) The moneys in the wildfire relief fund shall be
23 invested according to the same investment plans developed for
24 the Hawaii retirement savings special fund pursuant to chapter
25 389, and the earnings from such investments shall be credited to
26 the wildfire relief fund.

27 (g) All moneys in the wildfire relief fund shall be
28 appropriated and expended exclusively for the uses and purposes

1 set forth in this chapter; provided that this section shall not
2 be deemed to amend or impair the force or effect of any law of
3 this State specifically authorizing the investment of moneys
4 from the wildfire relief fund.

5 **§ -3 Wildfire relief fund corporation; establishment;**
6 **purposes; duties.** (a) The wildfire relief fund corporation is
7 hereby established as an independent public body corporate and
8 politic.

9 (b) The corporation shall be established within the
10 department of commerce and consumer affairs for administrative
11 purposes.

12 (c) The purpose of the corporation shall be to administer
13 the payment of:

14 (1) Eligible claims arising from catastrophic wildfires
15 from the wildfire relief fund; and

16 (2) Contributions of contributors to the wildfire relief
17 fund.

18 (d) The corporation shall:

19 (1) Receive, process, and determine payments for eligible
20 claims for property damage arising from catastrophic
21 wildfires from the wildfire relief fund;

22 (2) Determine and enforce the collection of contributions
23 from contributors to the wildfire relief fund;

24 (3) Retain, employ, or contract with officers; experts;
25 employees; accountants; actuaries; financial
26 professionals; and other advisers, consultants,
27 attorneys, and professionals, as may be necessary in
28 the administrator's judgment, for the efficient

- 1 operation, management, and administration of the
2 corporation;
- 3 (4) Enter into contracts and other obligations related to
4 the operation, management, and administration of the
5 corporation;
- 6 (5) Purchase insurance or take other actions to maximize
7 the claims-paying resources of the wildfire relief
8 fund;
- 9 (6) Pay costs, expenses, and other obligations of the
10 corporation from the wildfire relief fund's assets;
- 11 (7) Take any actions necessary to collect any amounts owed
12 to the wildfire relief fund; and
- 13 (8) Undertake such other activities as are related to the
14 operation, management, and administration of the
15 wildfire relief fund, as approved by the board.

16 **§ -4 Wildfire relief fund corporation; board of**
17 **directors.** (a) There is established a wildfire relief fund
18 board of directors, which shall consist of members appointed by
19 the governor in accordance with section 26-34. The board shall
20 be the policy-making body of the corporation. Accordingly, the
21 board shall be responsible for adopting policies for the
22 administration and operation of the wildfire relief fund and the
23 performance of other duties and functions assigned to the fund,
24 to the degree not specified in this chapter.

25 (b) The members of the board shall serve staggered terms,
26 with one-half of the members' initial terms ending four years
27 after the initial appointment, and one-half of the members'
28 initial terms ending six years after the initial appointment.

1 Thereafter, each member shall serve four-year terms. Vacancies
2 shall be filled for the remainder of any unexpired term in the
3 same manner as the original appointments.

4 (c) The chairperson of the board shall be elected from
5 among the appointed members of the board. A majority of all
6 members currently appointed to the board shall constitute a
7 quorum to conduct business, and the concurrence of a majority of
8 all members currently appointed to the board shall be necessary
9 to make any action valid, if not otherwise specified in this
10 chapter.

11 (d) Members of the board shall be appointed to ensure:

12 (1) A broad and balanced representation, with proper
13 judgment, character, expertise, skills, and knowledge
14 useful to the oversight of the corporation; and

15 (2) Diversity with regard to viewpoints, background, work
16 experience, and demographics.

17 The members of the board shall serve without compensation
18 but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses,
19 including travel expenses, incurred in the discharge of their
20 duties.

21 (e) The board shall meet at least once every three months
22 at a time and place determined by the board. The board shall
23 meet at such other times and places as determined by the call of
24 the chairperson or by a majority of the members of the board.

25 (f) No later than twenty days before the convening of each
26 regular session, the board shall submit to the legislature and
27 governor a report regarding the activities and operations of the
28

1 corporation during the preceding year. The report shall include,
2 at a minimum, a description of:

- 3 (1) The effectiveness of the wildfire relief fund's
4 claims-payment process; and
5 (2) The level of participation in the wildfire relief fund
6 by all eligible participants, including property
7 owners, property insurers, and contributors.

8 The legislature shall consider the report in determining
9 whether any adjustments to the wildfire relief fund are
10 necessary.

11 (g) Each member of the board shall retain all immunities
12 and rights provided to a member pursuant to section 26-35.5.

13 **§ -5 Administrator; wildfire relief fund corporation.**

14 (a) The board shall appoint an administrator and oversee the
15 administrator's management and administration of the
16 corporation.

17 (b) The administrator shall serve at the pleasure of the
18 board and shall be exempt from chapter 76.

19 (c) The administrator shall have such powers as are
20 necessary to carry out the functions of the corporation, subject
21 to the policy direction of the board.

22 (d) The administrator may employ, terminate, and supervise
23 employees, including assistants, experts, field personnel, and
24 clerks, as may be necessary in the administration of the
25 corporation.

26 (e) The board may overturn any decision of the
27 administrator through a majority vote.

28

1 (f) At the direction of the board, the administrator shall
2 prepare and present for approval a plan of operations related to
3 the operations, management, and administration of the wildfire
4 relief fund on an annual basis. At least annually and at the
5 direction of the board, the administrator shall present the plan
6 of operations to the appropriate policy committees of the
7 legislature. The plan shall include but not be limited to
8 reporting on the wildfire relief fund's assets and projections
9 for the duration of the fund.

10 (g) At the direction of the board, the administrator shall
11 at least annually prepare and publish on the corporation's
12 website a public-facing report that describes the operations and
13 activities of the corporation and wildfire relief fund during
14 the preceding year, including a description of the financial
15 condition of the wildfire relief fund.

16 **§ -6 Wildfire relief fund corporation; audit.** (a) The
17 auditor shall conduct an annual audit of the corporation
18 and wildfire relief fund pursuant to chapter 23. As part of this
19 audit, the auditor may contract with a firm qualified to perform
20 an independent actuarial review.

21 (b) The auditor shall determine the scope of the review
22 required by this section, which shall include but is not limited
23 to:

- 24 (1) A review of the sources and uses of the moneys in the
25 wildfire relief fund;
- 26 (2) A reconciliation of changes in actuarial assumptions
27 and reserve values from the preceding year;

28

1 (3) An examination of the development of claim reserve
2 inadequacies or redundancies over time; and

3 (4) An assessment of the future financial viability of the
4 wildfire relief fund.

5 (c) The corporation shall cooperate with the actuarial
6 firm in all respects and shall permit the firm full access to
7 all information the firm deems necessary for a true and complete
8 review. Information provided to the actuarial firm conducting
9 the annual review is subject to the same limitations on public
10 inspections as required for the records of the corporation.

11 (d) The audit required by this section shall be conducted
12 using both generally accepted accounting principles and the
13 statutory accounting principles published by the National
14 Association of Insurance Commissioners.

15 (e) The cost of the audit required by this section shall
16 be paid by the corporation. `

17 (f) The auditor shall issue an annual report to the
18 governor, president of the senate, and speaker of the house of
19 representatives on the results of the audit and review. The
20 audit and report of the review performed by the independent
21 actuarial firm shall be available for public inspection, in
22 accordance with the auditor's established rules and procedures
23 governing public disclosure of audit documents.

24 (g) The legislature shall consider whether, after review
25 of the annual report in subsection (f), any adjustments to the
26 wildfire relief fund should be implemented.

27 **§ -7 Wildfire relief fund; participation.** (a) The
28

1 following entities may participate in the wildfire relief
2 fund as contributors:

3 (1) The State;

4 (2) Electric utilities;

5 (3) Public utilities that are not electric utilities that
6 contribute to the risk of occurrence or severity of a
7 catastrophic wildfire, including but not limited to
8 public utilities for the production, conveyance,
9 transmission, delivery, or furnishing of gas and for
10 the conveyance of telecommunications messages;

11 (4) Other governmental entities; and

12 (5) Private landowners who own, or whose affiliated
13 persons or entities own in the aggregate, at least one
14 thousand acres of land in Hawaii.

15 (b) To participate in the wildfire relief fund, an entity
16 shall:

17 (1) Notify the administrator that it intends to
18 participate in the wildfire relief fund
19 by in the year preceding the year in which
20 the entity seeks to participate in the wildfire relief
21 fund; and

22 (2) Have made required contributions to the wildfire
23 relief fund pursuant to section -8.

24 (c) A contributor that is also a property owner in Hawaii
25 may make a claim to the wildfire relief fund for compensation in
26 the same manner provided for in section -13 as other property
27 owners; provided that the contributor:

28

1 (1) Retains all of the rights, privileges, and obligations
2 of a contributor; and

3 (2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter
4 and regardless of the existence of a depletion event
5 under section -16(c), is bound by the limitation
6 on claims under section -18.

7 (d) Any person or entity that poses a risk of causing or
8 exacerbating the severity of a catastrophic wildfire that is not
9 eligible to participate as a contributor in the wildfire relief
10 fund may submit an application to the board for participation.

11 (e) The board shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 and
12 issue criteria for applications submitted under subsection (d).

13 (f) The board shall include in its annual report to the
14 legislature and governor under section -4 all applications
15 submitted under subsection (d) and shall recommend to the
16 legislature whether participation criteria for contributors
17 should be broadened.

18 **§ -8 Wildfire relief fund; funding.** (a) Total
19 capitalization. The total capitalization amount of the wildfire
20 relief fund shall be \$. Neither the board nor the
21 administrator may modify the total capitalization amount, except
22 as otherwise expressly provided in this chapter.

23 (b) Actuarial study. The board shall commission an
24 actuarial study to be completed in 2024 to assess whether the
25 total capitalization amount should be increased or decreased
26 based on a holistic assessment of the risk of catastrophic
27 wildfires in Hawaii, and the potential exposure of the fund to
28 claims arising out of such wildfires. The board shall include

1 this assessment in the annual report that it submits to the
2 legislature and governor under section -4. The legislature
3 shall consider that assessment, as well as other information
4 submitted in the annual report, to determine whether adjustments
5 to the wildfire relief fund, including to its total
6 capitalization amount, should be implemented.

7 (c) Time to total capitalization. The administrator shall
8 recommend to the board, and the board shall, by majority vote,
9 approve initial contribution amounts under \$ for
10 potential contributors, other than the State and electric
11 utilities, based on the actuarial factors identified in
12 subsection (b) and with the goal of, to the extent reasonably
13 possible, having the wildfire relief fund reach the total
14 capitalization amount within five years of the effective date of
15 this Act, taking into consideration reasonably expected
16 investment returns and assuming no payments will be made by the
17 wildfire relief fund during that time period.

18 (d) Capitalization amounts. With the exception of the
19 contribution made by the State in paragraph (4), contribution
20 amounts shall be divided by the administrator into an initial
21 contribution amount to be made by , and annual
22 contribution amounts to be made over a five-year period, subject
23 to the administrator's ability to increase payments under the
24 insufficient funding provision in subsection (g).

25 The wildfire relief fund shall be capitalized by the
26 following contributions:

27 (1) From other governmental entities that are eligible to
28 elect to participate in the wildfire relief fund, an

1 amount determined by the administrator based on an
2 actuarial assessment of the risk of payments to these
3 entities by the fund resulting from catastrophic
4 wildfires created by such entities, as well as the
5 risk of potential payments made by the fund resulting
6 from catastrophic wildfires created by these entities;

7 (2) From public utilities other than electric utilities
8 and private landowners that are in all cases eligible
9 to participate in the wildfire relief fund, an amount
10 determined by the administrator based on an actuarial
11 assessment of the risk of potential payments by the
12 wildfire relief fund resulting from catastrophic
13 wildfires created by these entities;

14 (3) From electric utilities, \$; and

15 (4) From the State, \$.

16 (e) The board shall determine the contribution amounts of
17 eligible contributors by ; provided that this date is
18 thirty days before the date by which participants are required
19 to notify the administrator of their intention to participate in
20 the wildfire relief fund. If an eligible contributor declines to
21 notify the administrator that the eligible contributor wishes to
22 participate in the wildfire relief fund and become a
23 contributor, the board shall reduce the total capitalization
24 amount by subtracting the amount the board allocated to that
25 eligible contributor.

26 (f) If an electric utility, public utility other than an
27 electric utility, other governmental entity, or private
28 landowner elects to become a contributor after the initial

1 capitalization of the wildfire relief fund, the electric
2 utility, public utility other than an electric utility, other
3 governmental entity, or private landowner shall provide,
4 by _____ in the year before the year in which the electric
5 utility, public utility other than an electric utility, other
6 governmental entity, or private landowner seeks to become a
7 contributor, an initial contribution in an amount determined by
8 the board by a majority vote upon the administrator's
9 recommendation, based on an up-to-date consideration of the
10 factors identified in subsection (b), such that the previous and
11 present initial contributions by all contributors reflect their
12 relative contributions to the risk of future payments from the
13 wildfire relief fund.

14 If necessary to achieve such an allocation of initial
15 contributions, and if the election is made prior to the fifth
16 year of fund operation, the administrator shall reduce the
17 amount of annual contributions by one or more contributors who
18 previously made initial contributions until such an allocation
19 is reached. The administrator shall increase the total
20 capitalization amount of the fund by the amount of the initial
21 contribution of the new fund contributor. The administrator may,
22 in the administrator's discretion, permit a new contributor
23 under this subsection to make payments over a five-year period.

24 (g) Insufficient funding. If the administrator determines
25 that payments made by the wildfire relief fund, and expected
26 future contributions by contributors and investment returns,
27 will result in the fund's: failing to reach the total
28 capitalization amount, as adjusted, as applicable, under

1 subsection (a), by the fifth year; or falling below the total
2 capitalization amount after the fifth year--including, in either
3 case, as a result of the legislature increasing the total
4 capitalization amount--the administrator shall recommend that
5 the board establish a supplemental contribution to be
6 contributed to the wildfire relief fund. Responsibility among
7 contributors for the supplemental contribution shall be
8 allocated as follows:

9 (1) The administrator shall recommend to the board, and
10 the board shall determine by majority vote, the
11 respective portions of the supplemental contribution
12 amount to be paid by each electric utility, other
13 public utility, other governmental entity, and private
14 landowner contributor, based on an up-to-date
15 assessment of the factors identified in subsection
16 (b); and

17 (2) The remaining amount of the supplemental amount shall
18 be paid by the State, subject to legislative
19 appropriation.

20 (h) The administrator may allow contributors to pay
21 supplemental contributions via annual contributions, or in part
22 via an initial contribution followed by annual contributions,
23 unless the administrator determines such a contribution schedule
24 will create a material risk that the wildfire relief fund will
25 not reach or return to its total capitalization amount within a
26 reasonable period of time to perform the functions identified in
27 this chapter.

28

1 (i) If the board establishes a supplemental contribution
2 pursuant to subsection (g), before the wildfire relief fund
3 receives the supplemental contribution, the wildfire relief fund
4 may issue revenue bonds up to the amount of the supplemental
5 contribution, which shall be backed by future contributions to
6 the wildfire relief fund.

7 (j) The board may order supplemental contributions under
8 this chapter even if an investigation under the replenishment
9 process under section -9 is ongoing. In the event that
10 payments are later made under that replenishment process, the
11 board, provided that other conditions of the refunds section are
12 met pursuant to section -11, may refund supplemental
13 contributions in whole or in part.

14 (k) Utility contribution. An investor-owned utility's
15 contributions to the wildfire relief fund, including initial and
16 supplemental contributions, shall be recovered from its
17 customers in rates, unless the public utilities commission
18 directs otherwise pursuant to section -9.

19 (l) If the total amount of payments that the administrator
20 determines should be paid in connection with a catastrophic
21 wildfire pursuant to sections -13, -14, and -15 exceeds
22 the current balance of the wildfire relief fund, the State may
23 provide a loan to the wildfire relief fund. The loan shall be
24 repaid over time through annual contributions by contributors.

25 **§ -9 Replenishment of the wildfire relief fund;**
26 **determination of prudence.** (a) If the administrator, or an
27 agency of the State with responsibility for determining the
28 causes of wildfires, informs the public utilities commission

1 that a catastrophic wildfire may have been ignited by the
2 facilities of an investor-owned utility that is a contributor,
3 the public utilities commission shall initiate a proceeding to
4 review the investor-owned utility's conduct leading to the
5 catastrophic wildfire and make findings. The public utilities
6 commission may, even without formal notice from the
7 administrator or the agency, initiate this proceeding of its own
8 accord.

9 (b) The public utilities commission shall evaluate the
10 prudence of the conduct of the investor-owned utility in
11 connection with a catastrophic wildfire as follows:

12 (1) If the investor-utility has a wildfire risk mitigation
13 plan that was approved by the public utilities
14 commission, the investor-utility's conduct will be
15 deemed to have been prudent, unless a party to the
16 proceeding creates a serious doubt as to the prudence
17 of the investor-owned utility's conduct; or

18 (2) If the investor-utility does not have a wildfire risk
19 mitigation plan that was approved by the public
20 utilities commission, or if the public utilities
21 commission determines that the presumption is
22 overcome, the public utilities commission shall
23 determine whether the investor-owned utility acted
24 prudently, considering only acts that may have caused
25 the ignition and evaluating the utility's actions in
26 the context of the utility's overall systems,
27 processes and programs, such that an error by a
28 utility employee would not be a basis for a finding of

1 imprudence, unless that error was the result of an
2 imprudent system, process, or program.

3 (c) In evaluating prudence under this section, the public
4 utilities commission shall determine whether the actions of the
5 investor-owned utility were consistent with actions that a
6 reasonable utility would have undertaken in good faith under
7 similar circumstances, at the relevant point in time, and based
8 on the information available to the investor-owned utility at
9 the relevant point in time.

10 Reasonable conduct shall not be limited to the optimum
11 practice, method, or act to the exclusion of others, but rather
12 shall encompass a spectrum of possible practices, methods, or
13 acts consistent with utility system needs, the interest of
14 ratepayers, and the requirements of governmental agencies of
15 competent jurisdiction.

16 (d) If the public utilities commission determines that
17 imprudent conduct by the investor-owned utility caused the
18 catastrophic wildfire, the public utilities commission shall
19 determine whether to order the utility to reimburse the wildfire
20 relief fund in whole or in part for payments from the fund made
21 in connection with the catastrophic wildfire. In determining the
22 amount of reimbursement, if any, the public utilities commission
23 shall consider the extent and severity of the utility's
24 imprudence and factors within and beyond the utility's control
25 that may have led to or exacerbated the costs from the
26 catastrophic wildfire, including but not limited to humidity,
27 temperature, winds, fuel, merged wildfires with independent

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1 ignitions, third-party actions that affected the spread of the
2 wildfire, and fire suppression activities.

3 (e) The public utilities commission shall not order the
4 investor-owned utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in
5 an amount that exceeds the lesser of:

6 (1) The costs that the public utilities commission
7 determines were due to the investor-owned utility's
8 imprudence; or

9 (2) Twenty per cent of the investor-owned utility's
10 transmission and distribution equity rate base minus
11 the amounts the utility has reimbursed, or is required
12 to reimburse, the wildfire relief fund during the
13 period of three consecutive calendar years ending on
14 December 31 of the year in which the calculation is
15 being performed.

16 (f) If the public utilities commission orders the
17 investor-owned utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund,
18 the utility shall not recover the amount of the reimbursement in
19 rates charged to ratepayers.

20 (g) If the administrator, or an agency of the State with
21 responsibility for determining the causes of wildfires or other
22 catastrophic wildfires concludes that the conduct of a
23 cooperative utility, other governmental entity, or private
24 landowner that is a contributor may have caused the occurrence
25 or contributed to the severity of a catastrophic wildfire, the
26 administrator shall assess the prudence of the contributor's
27 conduct, applying the same standard of prudence applied to
28 investor-owned utilities pursuant to subsection (c).

1 (h) If the administrator determines that the contributor
2 acted imprudently and that such imprudence caused or contributed
3 to the severity of the catastrophic wildfire, the administrator
4 shall recommend that the board require such contributor to
5 reimburse the wildfire relief fund in whole or in part for
6 payments that the fund made in connection with the catastrophic
7 wildfire, considering the factors set forth in subsection (d),
8 subject to a cap of ten per cent of the contributor's assets
9 within Hawaii, measured over a rolling three-year period.

10 **§ -10 Failure to make contributions to wildfire relief**
11 **fund.** (a) Contributors shall notify the administrator if they
12 will make, or fail to make, a required contribution, whether
13 initial, annual, or supplemental, to the wildfire relief fund at
14 least days before the contribution is due.

15 (b) If a contributor fails to make a required contribution
16 to the wildfire relief fund, that contributor will no longer be
17 a contributor as of the date that the contribution was due. That
18 entity may, however, rejoin the fund under the process for
19 joining the fund after initial capitalization set forth in
20 section -8.

21 (c) The administrator shall not refund to an entity that
22 fails to make a contribution any previous payments made to the
23 wildfire relief fund. However, the administrator shall credit
24 all such previous contributions when determining the amount of
25 payment to be made if a participant rejoins the fund under
26 subsection (b).

27 **§ -11 Refunds.** (a) In the event that the total amount
28 in the wildfire relief fund exceeds one hundred twenty per cent

1 of the total capitalization amount, the administrator may
2 recommend that the board authorize refunds to be made to the
3 contributors; provided that the refunds do not deplete the
4 wildfire relief fund below one hundred twenty per cent of the
5 total capitalization amount.

6 (b) Refunds shall be made in proportion to the total
7 amount contributed by the contributors to the wildfire relief
8 fund as of the date of the refund, excluding any payments made
9 under the replenishment provisions under section -9.

10 (c) The administrator has no obligation to recommend, and
11 the board has no obligation to authorize, a refund. The board
12 shall make a refund only if it takes into consideration all
13 relevant factors and circumstances and determines that making a
14 refund will be unlikely to result in the wildfire relief fund's
15 falling below one hundred twenty per cent of total
16 capitalization within three years after the refund.

17 (d) Any contributor may request that the board make a
18 refund whenever the conditions under this section are met.

19 (e) If the board elects to issue a refund or elects not to
20 do so after receiving a request under subsection (d), the
21 administrator shall issue an order explaining the board's
22 decision.

23 **§ -12 Processing of claims.** (a) With the approval of
24 the board, the administrator shall establish and approve
25 procedures for the review, approval, and timely payment of
26 claims for reimbursement from the wildfire relief fund. The
27 procedures may be revised from time to time by the administrator
28 with the approval of the board.

1 (b) In the event of a catastrophic wildfire within the
2 State, the administrator shall process claims made for
3 compensation against the wildfire relief fund related to the
4 catastrophic wildfire, consistent with the requirements of this
5 chapter.

6 § -13 Claims by property owners. (a) To be eligible
7 for compensation from the wildfire relief fund for damage to
8 property from a catastrophic wildfire, a property owner shall
9 not have opted out from participation in the wildfire relief
10 fund before the occurrence of the catastrophic wildfire.

11 (b) County tax assessors shall include, with each real
12 property tax assessment sent to a property owner in the State, a
13 prominent notice regarding participation in the wildfire relief
14 fund. The notice shall be in a form prescribed by the
15 administrator and shall clearly explain the property owner's
16 right to opt out of participation in the wildfire relief fund by
17 submitting a request to opt out to the administrator within a
18 specific time. A property owner who does not submit a timely
19 request to opt out shall be deemed to participate in the
20 wildfire relief fund as of the deadline for submitting a request
21 to opt out.

22 (c) Any costs of administering the process described in
23 subsection (b) shall be reimbursed by the wildfire relief fund.

24 (d) In order to opt out of participation in the wildfire
25 relief fund with regard to property either in areas within the
26 State that have been assigned extreme, high, and moderate
27 wildfire risk classes by _____, a property owner shall
28 submit documentation of insurance coverage for such property

1 along with the property owner's request to opt out of the
2 wildfire relief fund, and the administrator shall approve such
3 documentation as adequate evidence of insurance for the
4 applicable property.

5 (e) Following a catastrophic wildfire, to make a claim for
6 compensation from the wildfire relief fund for damage to
7 property from the wildfire, a property owner shall submit to the
8 administrator documentation establishing:

9 (1) That the catastrophic wildfire damaged the owner's
10 property;

11 (2) The extent of the losses to the owner's property
12 caused by that catastrophic wildfire; and

13 (3) Any insurance policy providing coverage for those
14 losses.

15 (f) Within ninety days after a property owner submits a
16 claim for compensation from the wildfire relief fund, including
17 the documentation required in this section, the administrator
18 shall determine whether the documentation is adequate and, if
19 so, the appropriate amount of the payment to the property owner
20 from the wildfire relief fund. If the administrator determines
21 that the property owner has not submitted sufficient
22 documentation for the administrator to evaluate the claim, the
23 administrator may request additional documentation from the
24 property owner and may set a date by which the additional
25 information shall be provided by the property owner.

26 (g) If no insurance policy provides coverage for the
27 losses for which a property owner seeks compensation from the
28 wildfire relief fund, the property owner shall be eligible to

1 receive as compensation from the wildfire relief fund a maximum
2 of \$.

3 (h) If an insurance policy provides coverage for the
4 losses for which a property owner seeks compensation from the
5 wildfire relief fund, the property owner shall be eligible to
6 receive as compensation from the wildfire relief fund an amount
7 up to the lesser of:

8 (1) per cent of the amount by which the property
9 owner's losses exceed the amount of insurance coverage
10 for such losses; or

11 (2) per cent of the property owner's insurance
12 coverage applicable to such losses;

13 provided that the property owner submits adequate documentation
14 of those losses, as required by this section.

15 **§ -14 Claims by property insurers.** (a) To be eligible
16 for compensation from the wildfire relief fund, a property
17 insurer shall have elected to participate in the fund prior to
18 the annual policy period in which the catastrophic wildfire
19 occurred. The administrator shall establish a process for
20 property insurers to annually submit an election to participate
21 in the fund to the administrator within a specified time.

22 (b) All property insurers who elect to participate in the
23 wildfire relief fund shall be eligible to receive as
24 compensation from the wildfire relief fund per cent of
25 their total payments for property damage claims in Hawaii as a
26 result of a catastrophic wildfire.

27 (c) Following a catastrophic wildfire, to make a claim for
28 compensation from the wildfire relief fund based on claims

1 resulting from the catastrophic wildfire, an eligible property
2 insurer shall submit to the administrator documentation
3 establishing the number, nature, and total value of insurance
4 claims that the property insurer paid pursuant to its policies
5 for damage resulting from the catastrophic wildfire as well as
6 documentation sufficient to assess the reasonableness of the
7 property insurer's payment of such claims.

8 (d) After receipt of a property insurer's claim for
9 compensation from the wildfire relief fund, including the
10 documentation required in this section, the administrator shall:

11 (1) Review via an expedited procedure the property
12 insurer's claim for compensation from the wildfire
13 relief fund; and

14 (2) Determine:

15 (A) Whether the documentation provided is adequate;
16 and

17 (B) The appropriate amount of the payment to the
18 property insurer from the fund.

19 **§ -15 Claims by the State and other governmental**

20 **entities.** (a) The State may submit claims for compensation from
21 the wildfire relief fund for damages it incurred resulting from
22 a catastrophic wildfire, including damage to infrastructure or
23 other property, costs of fire suppression, and natural resource
24 damages, to the extent recovery of such losses is authorized by
25 law.

26 (b) Other governmental entities may submit claims for
27 compensation from the wildfire relief fund for damages they
28 incurred resulting from a catastrophic wildfire, including

1 damage to infrastructure or other property and other losses, to
2 the extent recovery of such losses is authorized by law;
3 provided that to be eligible for compensation from the wildfire
4 relief fund related to a catastrophic wildfire, another
5 governmental entity shall elect to be a contributor and shall
6 have satisfied contribution obligations pursuant to
7 section -8 before the occurrence of the catastrophic
8 wildfire.

9 (c) To make a claim under this section, the State or other
10 governmental entity shall submit to the administrator
11 documentation establishing:

- 12 (1) That the catastrophic wildfire caused the damages;
- 13 (2) The extent of the damages caused by the catastrophic
14 wildfire; and
- 15 (3) Any other documentation necessary to establish the
16 State's or other governmental entity's right to
17 recover such losses pursuant to law.

18 (d) After receipt of a claim for compensation from the
19 wildfire relief fund pursuant to this section, the administrator
20 shall determine whether the State or other governmental entity
21 is authorized to recover damages under applicable law and, if
22 so, the appropriate amount of the payment.

23 **§ -16 Fund depletion.** (a) Within thirty days of a
24 catastrophic wildfire, the administrator shall assess whether
25 the total payments that the wildfire relief fund is projected to
26 make to eligible property owners, property insurers, and the
27 State and other governmental entities under
28 sections -13, -14, and -15, respectively, are

1 expected to exceed seventy-five per cent of the total available
2 money remaining in the wildfire relief fund. The board shall
3 adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 regarding the performance of
4 this assessment.

5 (b) If the administrator assesses pursuant to subsection
6 (a) that the total payments that the wildfire relief fund is
7 projected to make to eligible property owners, property
8 insurers, and the State and other governmental entities under
9 sections -13, -14, and -15, respectively, are expected
10 to exceed seventy-five per cent of the total available money
11 remaining in the wildfire relief fund, the administrator shall
12 seek to increase the total amount of money in the fund using all
13 available methods under this chapter.

14 (c) Depletion event. If the administrator is unable,
15 despite taking the steps under subsection (b), to secure
16 sufficient additional funding for the wildlife relief fund,
17 including credible pledges for future funding, to reverse the
18 administrator's assessment under subsection (a) within forty-
19 five days, the administrator shall declare the existence of a
20 depletion event.

21 (d) Depletion percentage. If the administrator declares
22 the existence of a depletion event, the administrator shall
23 determine what percentage of total eligible payments the
24 wildlife relief fund can make without the likelihood that the
25 payments will exceed seventy-five per cent of the total
26 available money in the wildlife relief fund. This percentage
27 shall be deemed the depletion percentage.

28

1 (e) Depletion payment. The administrator shall thereafter
2 offer all property owners, property insurers, the State, and
3 other governmental entities that submit claims for compensation
4 from the wildfire relief fund and would otherwise, under
5 sections -13, -14, and -15, respectively, be entitled
6 to a particular payment amount, that amount multiplied by the
7 depletion percentage. This amount shall be deemed the depletion
8 payment.

9 (f) All claimants that are offered the depletion payment
10 may choose to accept or decline the payment. Any property owner
11 or property insurer, other than a contributor, that declines to
12 accept the depletion payment shall:

13 (1) Be ineligible for any payments by the wildfire relief
14 fund with respect to the catastrophic wildfire for
15 which the claim was made; and

16 (2) Not be bound by the limitation on claims under
17 section -18 with respect to only that catastrophic
18 wildfire.

19 (g) After the payments to all claimants who accepted the
20 depletion payment have been made, the administrator may
21 recommend to the board, and the board may decide, in its
22 discretion, to make a further payment to all claimants who
23 accepted the depletion payment. The board shall adopt rules
24 pursuant to chapter 91 for the making of this decision.

25 (h) Multiple catastrophic events. The board shall adopt
26 rules pursuant to chapter 91 regarding how to pay claims in the
27 event that one or more catastrophic wildfires occur while the
28 corporation is in the process of assessing, receiving,

1 determining, or paying claims from an earlier catastrophic
2 wildfire.

3 **§ -17 Hearings and appeals of determinations.** (a)

4 Within thirty days after the administrator's determination of
5 the amount of payment due to any claimant from the wildfire
6 relief fund pursuant to sections -13, -14, and -15,
7 respectively, or the board's determination of a contributor's
8 allocation for any contribution, the affected person or entity
9 may request a ~~review and~~ contested case hearing on that
10 determination before the department of commerce and consumer
11 affairs, pursuant to chapter 91.

12 (b) Upon receipt of a request for ~~review of~~ hearing on the
13 administrator or board's determination, ~~the department of~~
14 ~~commerce and consumer affairs shall refer the request for~~
15 ~~hearing to the office of administrative hearings for~~
16 ~~determination as expeditiously as possible. A hearing shall be~~
17 ~~scheduled for a date no more~~ the office of administrative
18 hearings shall schedule a hearing date no later than days
19 after its receipt ~~by the department of commerce and consumer~~
20 ~~affairs~~ of the request for a hearing.

21 (c) Following the conclusion of any hearing or prior to
22 the conclusion of the hearing, with the concurrence of the
23 parties, the office of administrative hearings shall promptly,
24 and no later than days after the hearing, decide the matter
25 and ~~make an order~~ issue findings of fact, conclusions of law, and
26 a decision in accordance with the ~~administrative judge's~~
27 ~~decision.~~ hearing officer's determination.

28

1 (d) Within days after the date on which a copy of the
2 office of administrative hearings' order is mailed to the
3 parties, a party may seek judicial review of the order by filing
4 a petition for review in the applicable circuit court, with a
5 right of appeal as allowed by law. If no such petition is timely
6 filed, the order of the office of administrative hearings shall
7 be final.

8 **§ -18 Limitations on claims.** (a) No suit, claim, or
9 other civil legal action may be instituted or maintained
10 against contributors or their affiliates, employees, agents, or
11 insurers:

12 (1) For recovery of losses or damages of a type for which
13 compensation may be sought from the wildfire relief
14 fund; and

15 (2) By persons or entities:

16 (A) Who are contributors, property owners who do not
17 opt out of the wildfire relief fund, or property
18 insurers who elect to participate in the wildfire
19 relief fund; or

20 (B) Who seek indemnity or contribution for amounts
21 paid, or that may be paid, to contributors,
22 property owners who do not opt out of the
23 wildfire relief fund, or property insurers who
24 elect to participate in the wildfire relief fund.

25 (b) Persons or entities who are eligible to seek
26 compensation from the wildfire relief fund for property damage
27 arising from a catastrophic wildfire may not seek to recover for
28 such damage from electric utilities, public utilities other than

1 electric utilities, the State, or private landowners who are
2 contributors, notwithstanding that the claimed property damage
3 may exceed the amount of payment by the wildfire relief fund for
4 such damage.

5 (c) The wildfire relief fund shall be subrogated to the
6 rights of the contributors, property owners who do not opt out
7 of the wildfire relief fund, and property insurers who elect to
8 participate in the wildfire relief fund, to the extent of any
9 payment made by the wildfire relief fund to such person or
10 entity, such that the wildfire relief fund may pursue claims
11 against a person or entity that is not a contributor for damages
12 resulting from the catastrophic wildfire.”

13 (d) The wildfire relief fund will not be subject to
14 regulation under Chapter 431.

15 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
17 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for
18 deposit into the wildfire relief fund.

19 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
20 commerce and consumer affairs for the purposes of this Act.

21 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
22 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
23 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for
24 the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
25 administrator position, who shall be exempt from chapter 76,
26 Hawaii Revised Statutes, to support the Hawaii wildfire relief
27 fund corporation; provided that in all subsequent fiscal years,

28

1 all funding for the administrator position shall be paid from
2 the wildfire relief fund.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
4 commerce and consumer affairs for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 5. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of
6 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,
7 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the
8 appropriations contained in H.B. No. , will cause the state
9 general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be
10 exceeded by \$ or per cent. In addition, the
11 appropriation contained in this Act will cause the general fund
12 expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be further
13 exceeded by \$ or per cent. The combined total
14 amount of general fund appropriations contained in only these
15 two Acts will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling
16 for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by
17 \$ or per cent. The reasons for exceeding the
18 general fund expenditure ceiling are that:

- 19 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to
20 serve the public interest; and
21 (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs
22 addressed by this Act.

23 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
24 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

25 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

26 INTRODUCED BY: _____

27 **Report Title:**

28

1 Hawaii Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation; Public Utilities
2 Commission; Catastrophic Wildfire; Appropriation; Expenditure
3 Ceiling

3 **Description:**

4 Establishes the Hawaii wildfire relief fund and corporation to
5 provide compensation for property damage resulting from
6 catastrophic wildfires in the State. Appropriates funds.

6

7 *The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational*
8 *purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

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DATE: February 9, 2024

TO: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Chair, Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

FROM: Matt Tsujimura

RE: **S.B. 3344 – Relating to Wildfires**
Hearing Date: Friday, February 9, 2024 at 9:30AM
Conference Room: 229

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

I am Matt Tsujimura, representing State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company (State Farm). State Farm offers this testimony **in opposition** to S.B. 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

S.B. 3344 establishes the Hawaii Wildfire Relief Fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State.

S.B. 3344 does not protect consumers. Participating in the Wildfire Relief Fund would result in the property owner never being made whole. Instead, the proposal asks property owners and insurers to waive rights before a loss has occurred and the extent of the damage and liability is known. It requires property owners to participate in the fund unless they “opt out.” If the property owner does not affirmatively “opt out,” the only source of recovery against a negligent party is a pre-determined amount (uninsured property owner) or a percentage (insured property owner) of their overall loss. A property owner who failed to “opt out” may unknowingly waive their individual right to seek damages from a negligent party and which may also impact an insurer’s subrogation rights.¹

Insurers are required to “opt-in” to participate in the proposed Wildfire Relief Fund and, if they do so, the recovery is limited to a percentage predetermined by the fund. The proposal essentially asks an insurer to assess liability and likelihood of potential recovery before the event has occurred, a time when the facts, circumstances, and identity of the responsible parties is unknown.

Surprisingly, S.B. 3344 does not appear to *require* any type of wildfire mitigation plan by contributing entities to prevent catastrophic wildfire events. Rather, the proposal gives the public utilities commission, the fund administrator, or other state agency the ability

¹ Subrogation supports a critical public policy purpose of ensuring the party who caused the loss bears the financial burden for the damage caused.

to determine if the conduct was “prudent.”² While unlikely, this could enable contributing entities to pay into the fund to significantly limit their liability while limiting other types of preventative wildfire measures they could take due to the protection offered by being a fund contributor.

Ultimately, State Farm is concerned this proposal is detrimental to consumers and does little to help mitigate wildfire losses, while allowing the responsible parties to limit liability for their wrongful conduct.

For these reasons we offer this testimony in opposition. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

² Investor-owned utilities who have a wildfire mitigation plan approved by the public utilities commission are deemed to have been “prudent” unless a party to the proceeding creates doubt as to the conduct.



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

SENATE COMMITTEE COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

HEARING DATE: Friday, February 9, 2024
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: State Capitol
Conference Room 229

RE: **Testimony in Strong Support** of Senate Bill 3344

Aloha Honorable Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga , and Members of the Committee;

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1260 (IBEW 1260) would like to respectfully offer the following testimony **in Strong Support** of House Bill 3344.

IBEW 1260 is comprised of approximately 3,000 members representing Hawaii's electric utility companies as well as Government Service Contracts, and Media Personnel throughout Hawaii, Guam, and Wake Island. Our portion of our membership are a diverse local workforce of dedicated, highly skilled, and trained individuals working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to generate, transmit, and distribute electricity throughout Hawai'i and to ensure the reliability of this precious resource.

IBEW 1260 supports Senate Bill 3344 which establishes the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State.

Senate Bill 3344 seeks to establish a streamline process to provide mitigative relief and economic stability to all who would be affected by future catastrophic events. Recent events have magnified the tragic harm that can befall an entire community by such occurrences, and how critical such processes and financial backstops are to prevent economic uncertainty and to ensure the continued stability and viability of Hawai'i's major institutions.

The electric utility and infrastructure that Hawaiian Electric provides is vital to our community, and to our members and their families. As a local company, tracing its roots back to Hawai'i's monarchy, HECO has been a generous corporate partner and philanthropic contributor to our community and provides valuable and sustainable careers to many of Hawai'i's local residents. In a time when cost of living, housing, and affordability...especially here in Hawai'i, is at the forefront of most public policy discussions, it is important that we give great effort and consideration to policy that aims to prevent added harm from future events like what occurred recently on Maui, as well as processes to ensure Hawai'i's vital industries like HECO, remain viable and able to continue to serve our community as it has for over a century.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter, we look forward to working with you on this and other important matters going forward.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation; Public Utilities Commission; Catastrophic Wildfire

BILL NUMBER: HB 2700, SB 3344

INTRODUCED BY: HB by SAIKI; SB by RICHARDS, CHANG, DECOITE, FEVELLA, FUKUNAGA, GABBARD, HASHIMOTO, INOUE, KEOHOKALO, MCKELVEY, SHIMABUKURO, Kidani, Kim, San Buenaventura, Wakai

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State.

SYNOPSIS: Amends the HRS by adding a new chapter. The new chapter would establish the Wildfire Relief Fund and an associated quasi-government Wildfire Relief Fund Corporation. The entity is charged with administering a voluntary program for wildfire victims to apply for a payment from the fund in exchange for releasing from liability the entities that had contributed to the fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024.

STAFF COMMENTS: Our comments are contained in our publication of November 30, 2023, entitled "The Lahaina Recovery Fund," reprinted below.

The Lahaina Recovery Fund

One of the more innovative items announced by the Governor's office when it comes to disaster relief measures is the creation of a Lahaina Recovery Fund.

In a press release announcing the measure, the Governor's Office said that the concept was similar to the 9/11 Fund created in the aftermath of the destruction of the World Trade Center. The idea is that the government, Hawaiian Electric, Kamehameha Schools, and others who might be facing lawsuits would pay into the fund. Claimants who want a distribution from the fund agree not to sue the fund contributors.

It was a controversial enough plan that the Star-Advertiser conducted an informal "Big Q" online poll to see if its readers thought the fund was a good idea. (As of this writing, supporters were a little more than twice the number of detractors.)

Typical of the opposition was this post on X: "So in other words, what our state government deems is the value of your loss is all you will receive because you sign your rights away to sue for more?!? DON'T DO IT #LAHAINA!"

In a previous column, we urged the government to create this type of fund. The primary advantages are (1) claimants get money in months, not years; (2) claimants typically won't have

to contend with attorneys' fees, which could otherwise be a huge amount like a third of the recovery; and (3) people can get on with their lives instead of worrying about discovery, depositions, trial, and possible appeals.

The fund being proposed has a voluntary participation element, like many class actions. If someone thinks that they can get a better result by suing, they are certainly free to do so. And even for folks who sue, it's tough to get past the idea that the payment will "be a payment of the State's choosing." After all, if there is a settlement of any kind (90% of litigated court cases are settled), the government will have to sign off on the payment because it would be a defendant in the litigation.

Those who want to be purists about it would need to settle in for the long haul. Take-no-prisoners litigation would need at least a couple of years to get to trial. Many more years could be added to that if appeals follow. Those purists will be waiting a long time for their money.

So, how much is each participant going to get if they opt into the fund? The exact amount isn't known at this point. This is because negotiations are still ongoing with the potential defendants who would be putting money into the fund, and folks don't yet have a clear idea of how many people would be participating. This is not unusual even for mass tort litigation and other class actions. The Governor says that the amount per participant will be north of \$1 million. Obviously, this is not a case where the government is trying to get people to sign off for a pittance like 20 bucks in some preloaded gift card. This is serious money and should be considered by the claimants seriously.

People who are thinking about being a possible claimant of the fund need to thoughtfully consider the dollar amount, whether the claimant could do better if he or she filed a lawsuit, and the cost of that lawsuit. Attorneys don't come cheap, and a "contingency fee" where the attorney is paid only if there is a recovery may cost a third (or more) of the total recovery. Add to that the uncertainty of when, or if, litigation recovery will be paid. The recovery fund, in contrast, will be ready to pay out in months, not years.

Maui claimants can be the adults in the room. They can and should make their own choices about their own future. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to a Lahaina claim. We congratulate the Governor's office for putting this option on the table.

Digested: 1/31/2024

**THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024
Friday, February 9, 2024, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 229 State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street
Hearing on SB 3344**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

My name is Mike Kaleikini and we are testifying in **support** of **SB 3344**, Relating to Wildfires.

The Wildfire Relief Fund would provide property owners and insurers with a streamlined, non-litigation process for recovering property damage from future catastrophic wildfire, regardless of the cause.

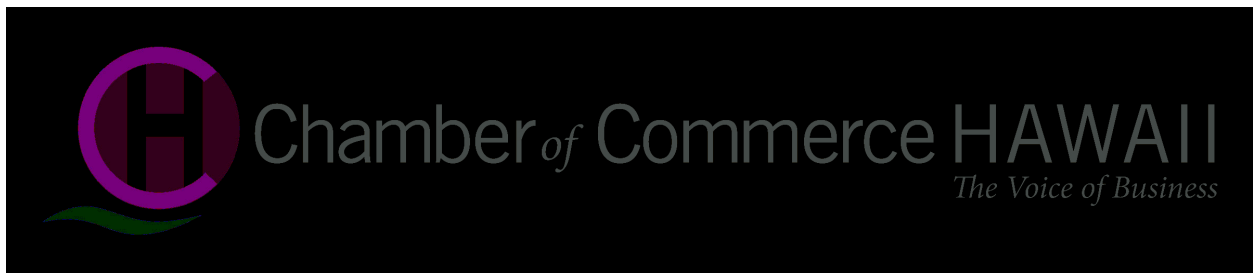
This bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

Respectfully,



Michael L. Kaleikini
Senior Director, Hawaii Affairs
Puna Geothermal Venture - Ormat



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, February 9, 2024, at 9:30AM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

RE: SB3344 Relating to Wildfires

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") offers testimony in general support of SB3344 which establishes a wildfire relief fund to ensure financial resources are available to support Hawaii residents that may be impacted by a future natural disaster. This bill would create an efficient process for recovering property damages and would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 3:41:46 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqui Hoover	Testifying for Hawaii Leeward Planning Conference	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am respectfully submitting this testimony in support of SB3344 on behalf of Hawaii Leeward Planning Conference (HLPC) a private, member-based 501(c)3 incorporated in 1974 when forward looking business people saw the need for an organization to work with government to promote sound planning decisions for West Hawaii, HLPC is committed to working with government agencies and private sector entities to assist in making decisions, and to alert and inform its members and public on issues relating to Hawaii Island/Hawaii County and their interests. HLPC initiatives include and are not limited to, agriculture; land use; infrastructure including energy, transportation, and water; housing; natural resources; workforce and economic development. In the intervening years, in recognition of changes to socioeconomics, communities, communications, technology, and policy making, HLPC has maintained its original name while broadening its scope to all of Hawaii Island.

Having borne witness to the devastating and tragic Lahaina wildfire, and experiencing multiple wildfires on Hawaii Island including on the same day as the events in Lahaina, HLPC fully supports ensuring the availability of resources in the event of future wildfires. While we hope such an event does not happen, historically we know that wildfire events have happened many times in Hawaii prior to August 2023. The creation of a wildlife relief fund for potential victims and providing a vehicle for property damage recovery should such a catastrophic event occur in the future, is critically important to Hawaii's preparedness and resilience.

Mahalo for this opportunity to speak in support of SB3344 for which we humbly seek support and passage.

Jacqui Hoover, President and COO

Hawaii Leeward Planning Conference

Senate Bill 3344 – Relating to Wildfires

TESTIMONY

Hawai'i State Senate
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Friday, February 9, 2024
9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 3344. With over three decades of experience on the islands, AES Hawai'i is the next generation energy company that is supporting the State of Hawai'i. AES Hawai'i shares the state's vision for a 100% renewable energy future and are working to accelerate that transition with clean energy products that can collectively produce more than 300 MW of solar, solar plus storage, hydro and wind energy. We are committed to doing more by expanding and diversifying the state's renewable energy portfolio to help build a greener, more sustainable future for all of Hawai'i.

The purpose of SB 3344 is to establish the Hawai'i Wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State and to appropriate funds. Following the Maui Wildfires that resulted in tragic losses of life, personal injuries and property damage, AES Hawai'i fully appreciates and supports the **intent** of this measure, as stated, as well as the proposal's intent to address the future stability of the investor and electric utility. Hawai'i needs a stable utility to meet the ambitious renewable energy goals embedded in our state energy policy.

We also understand that numerous stakeholders are seeking clarification on various aspects of this legislation and look forward to following the progress of these discussions through the legislative session.

Mahalo for your consideration.



Sandra Larsen
President
AES Hawai'i



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION
Friday, February 9, 2024 — 9:30 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports the intent of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Dear Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports the intent of SB 3344, which establishes the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State, but shares some comments for the committee's consideration.

Hawai'i's unique communities and ecosystems are increasingly threatened by the devastating impacts of wildfires. In recent years, we have witnessed a rise in the frequency and intensity of wildfires, exacerbated by climate change, land and water management practices, and urban encroachment into fire-prone areas. The culmination of these forces resulted in the devastating and heartbreaking destruction seen on Maui last year.

It is undisputed that it is important to prepare for increased risks from wildfires, and to ensure that loss and damage caused by wildfires are addressed. The establishment of the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund and Corporation could be an important opportunity to address the financial aftermath of such disasters. This initiative can help serve as a safety net for those affected, ensuring that residents have the support they need to rebuild their lives and homes without the overwhelming burden of financial insecurity.

While many may view such a bill as a benefit to existing electric utilities, it is important to note that any business will struggle with unlimited liability, making access to capital difficult or more expensive and constraining a business' ability to make much needed investments in the interim.¹ Furthermore, there is a very real risk that utilities may be unable to adequately insure against future climate related disasters, such as wildfires, and will increasingly rely on new approaches to

¹ As stated by the Hawaiian Electric Companies in its January 31, 2023, filing with the Public Utilities Commission, "Maui Electric is aware of 100 complaints related to the August 2023 Maui wildfires that assert claims against Maui Electric. One complaint is pending in the First Circuit Court in O'ahu, 19 complaints are pending in the Second Circuit Court in Maui County, and 80 complaints are pending in the U.S. District Court. for the District of Hawai'i." See Non-Docketed Case No. 2023-04643 Maui Electric Monthly Wildfire-Related Litigation Report January 2024.

<https://shareus11.springcm.com/Public/DownloadNative/25256/e52ef351-84c0-ee11-b83e-48df377ef808/0b5fa85f-a9c0-ee11-b83e-48df377ef808>

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

risk mitigation.² UluPono recognizes the multifaceted challenges facing the electric utilities, including the need to address ongoing potential wildfire liability while aggressively pursuing the state's policy goals of increasing clean energy, improving grid reliability and resiliency, and reducing costs for customers. As such, a measure such as this bill can help establish an approach going forward that would place boundaries around potential liability, while ensuring a pool of resources to help aid in future recovery needs. This is not a perfect solution—there are tradeoffs to be sure—but, on the whole, UluPono considers this a net positive for the state. There are a few elements worth noting from the bill as currently drafted:

The measure only covers property damage, not loss of lives: The bill does not attempt to place any limitations on the liability of loss of life, only focusing on loss of property. UluPono recognizes that such limitations are reasonable, by not constraining liability for the most sensitive and difficult type of loss.

A wildfire relief fund would reduce barriers to entry for potential third-party buyers of the electric utility: A financial support structure will reduce risk for potential investors in an investor-owned utility, thereby making it a more favorable opportunity.

Fund Recovery in Rates: As the bill is currently drafted, the utility can recover for contributions made to the wildfire relief fund through its rates, unless the utility's actions were found to be outside the scope of its pre-approved wildfire mitigation plan. While recovery for fund contributions through rates is less than ideal, if the fund is considered akin to an insurance policy, then utility customers already pay for utility insurance, and such a fund would only increase its coverage for wildfire damage.

UluPono offers the following comments/suggestions to improve the bills effectiveness:

Determination of Total Risk and Contributions: As currently drafted, the bill proposes to determine the total potential wildfire risk and determine the apportionment of contributions from fund members using an actuarial methodology. Such an approach should be better defined, as it is unclear how the apportionment between entities would be established without significant challenges from participants and stakeholders—which could lead to the delay in development of the fund and potentially slow down or inhibit the effectiveness of the fund.

Liability for Employee Error: As currently drafted, the bill protects funders from liability due to employee error, which should be modified to include what is legally applicable under normal employer/employee liability scenarios.

20% Cap on Transmission and Distribution Equity Rate Base: As currently drafted, the Public Utilities Commission, upon a finding of imprudence, is prohibited from ordering the investor-owned utility to reimburse the wildfire relief fund in an amount that exceeds the lesser of:

- (1) The costs that the Public Utilities Commission determines were due to the investor-owned utility's imprudence; or
- (2) Twenty per cent of the investor-owned utility's transmission and distribution equity rate

² **As wildfires losses mount, will commercial insurers decline to cover utilities?** Utility Dive, January 31, 2024. <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/wildfire-utility-grid-insurance-climate-pge-xcel-hawaiian-electric/703178/>



base minus the amounts the utility has reimbursed, or is required to reimburse, the wildfire relief fund during the period of three consecutive calendar years ending on December 31 of the year in which the calculation is being performed.

It is unclear whether the 20% cap on investor-owned utility's transmission and distribution equity rate base is a reasonable amount to place such a limitation. The concern would be that such a limitation would in fact be the lesser of the two potential amounts to such an extreme degree that the liability would far outstrip the cap. Further evaluation and analysis should be conducted in concert with the investor-owned utility to determine if this amount is prudent.

10% Cap on Hawai'i-Based Assets for Other Fund Contributors: On a similar note, other fund participants, such as a cooperative utility, another governmental entity, or a private landowner that is a contributor that may have caused the occurrence or contributed to the severity of a catastrophic wildfire, are subject to a cap of 10% of the contributor's assets within Hawai'i, measured over a rolling three-year period. While such a construct may work for some entities, other entities may be significantly shielded from liability due to their limited asset holdings in Hawai'i. As such, Ulupono recommends a deeper evaluation of the proposed caps to ensure adequate coverage if a finding of imprudence is in fact determined.

Adherence to the Wildfire Risk Mitigation Plan: As currently drafted, if the investor-utility has a wildfire risk mitigation plan that was approved by the Public Utilities Commission, the investor-owned utility's conduct will be deemed to have been prudent, unless a party to the proceeding creates a serious doubt as to the prudence of the investor-owned utility's conduct. Ulupono recommends that the bill also state that the Public Utilities Commission must also determine whether the investor-owned utility was in fact acting in compliance with the approved wildfire mitigation plan, not simply whether serious doubts are raised regarding the investor-owned utility's conduct. In other words, it should not be enough to simply have a wildfire mitigation plan in place, but rather, the investor-owned utility should also be following the plan in order to determine prudence.

The establishment of the Hawai'i Wildfire Relief Fund has the potential to help provide much-needed support and relief to those affected by wildfires in our state. By offering a reliable source of compensation, the fund will enhance the resilience of our communities, enabling quicker recovery and rebuilding efforts, and minimizing the long-term socio-economic impacts of wildfires.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs



Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

1321 Kino'ole Street
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Phone: (808) 935-7178
Fax: (808) 961-4435
E-mail: admin@hicc.biz
www.hicc.biz

February 7, 2024

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

RE: SB 3344 Relating to Wildfires

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce (HICC) **supports** SB 3344 which will establish the Hawai'i wildfire relief fund and corporation to provide compensation for property damage resulting from catastrophic wildfires in the State.

Founded in 1898, HICC has been a part of our island's business community for 125 years. Our organization is comprised of over 300 member businesses and professionals from a variety of industries including non-profit organizations from Hawai'i Island.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

Mahalo for this opportunity to express our support for this bill.

Sincerely,

Miles Yoshioka, Executive Officer
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by
Ruedi Tobler, General Manager
Kalaeloa Partners L.P.

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ruedi Tobler and I am the General Manager of the Kalaeloa Partners L.P. power generation facility and I am pleased to testify in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

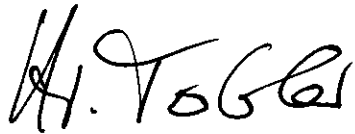
In Hawaii, we are proud to own and operate the Kalaeloa Partners L.P. power generation facility, which for over 30 years has provided baseload capacity and energy to Hawaiian Electric for almost 20% of Oahu's electrical energy needs.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

Kalaeloa values its longstanding relationship with Hawaiian Electric and is committed to the efforts of Hawaiian Electric and other critical stakeholders in Hawaii, including the State and County governments, to ensure the continued provision of safe and reliable energy to the people

of Hawaii. Kalaeloa therefore supports SB3344 and respectfully recommends your favorable consideration of this legislation.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Togel". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

February 5, 2024

RE: SB 3344: Relating to Wildfires

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection,

Founded in 1968, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce works to enhance the quality of life for our community through a strong, sustainable economy on Hawai'i Island. With 470 member businesses and organizations, our mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for a successful business environment in West Hawai'i.

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce **supports** SB 3344: Relating to Wildfires.

The catastrophic event that happened in West Maui is a reminder of how vulnerable we are to the dangers of wildfires. SB 3344 proposes a future solution that would create a wildfire relief fund to help potential victims recover from any catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause.

In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

We ask you to vote in favor of SB 3344: Relating to Wildfires.

Sincerely,



Wendy J. Laros, President and CEO
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Pauline Sato
Mālama Learning Center

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pauline Sato and on behalf of Mālama Learning Center, I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. Throughout my 40-year career in conservation in Hawai‘i, the threat of wildfires has been a constant concern and worry. I have experienced the stress of wildfires entering forest watersheds and nearing residences. We can no longer be satisfied with hoping that wildfires will not be catastrophic. We know it very well can, and while we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill’s purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share support.



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Eric Wright
Par Hawaii

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eric Wright and I serve as President of Par Hawaii. I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share support.

Testimony Before the Senate Committee on
Commerce and Consumer Protection

By David Bissell
President and Chief Executive Officer
Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative
4463 Pahe'e Street, Suite 1, Lihu'e, Hawai'i, 96766-2000

Friday, February 9, 2024; 9:30 am
Conference Room #229 & Videoconference

Senate Bill No. 3344 - RELATING TO WILDFIRES

To the Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole Chair, Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) is a not-for-profit utility providing electrical service to more than 34,000 commercial and residential members.

KIUC offers comments on this measure.

KIUC shares the legislature's concern regarding the risks posed by catastrophic wildfires and the potential impact to the health, safety and financial security of residents and businesses throughout the state. KIUC agrees that it is in the best interest of the state to minimize the impact of potential litigation following catastrophic events, and ensure residents have access to compensation for property damage resulting from wildfires.

The establishment of a Wildfire Relief Fund could have significant financial impacts, both positive and negative, on residents, businesses, utilities, government agencies and other stakeholders. KIUC believes the needs and circumstances of each of these stakeholders is diverse and should be considered prior to acting on this legislation. Without access to background on studies or other information used to develop this complex proposal, we have concerns about the bill's potential negative impact to KIUC. In order to support the establishment of a Wildfire Relief Fund, KIUC would need much more information on costs and potential benefits of participating, both initially and ongoing.

The preamble to HB 2700 states that the measure is designed in part to "...ensure that the threat of wildfires does not make investment in Hawaii's public utilities so financially risky that it becomes too costly or impossible for them to raise capital to implement vital plans, including plans to mitigate wildfire risk, and to provide safe, reliable, and affordable service to the people of the State."

While this is undoubtedly a consideration for an investor-owned utility such as Hawaiian Electric (HECO), a cooperative such as KIUC does not bear anywhere near the same amount of investment risk. Because KIUC has no shareholders and is therefore considered to be part of the public power universe of electric utilities, KIUC would have access to funding assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the event of a wildfire, and it is likely that FEMA would cover 75% of KIUC's rebuild costs following a major catastrophic event. Additionally, as a cooperative, KIUC has access to low-cost capital through the U.S.D.A. Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which would likely be a lower interest rate source of debt capital than even AAA-rated securitized bonds. If RUS debt is unavailable, KIUC would seek capital from one of our cooperative lenders, such as the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation or CoBank.

In light of these concerns and, in the event this bill moves forward, KIUC suggests the following amendments:

Amendment 1: Page 17, line 7: "potential contributors, other than the State and investor-owned electric"

Amendment 2: Page 18, line 18: "(3) From investor-owned electric utilities, \$; and"

Amendment 3: Page 21, Line 9: "amount to be paid by each contributing electric utility, other"

Amendment 4: Page 22, line 17: "(k) Utility Contribution. An investor-owned or cooperative utility's"

Amendments 1, 2 and 3 allow KIUC the option of becoming a contributor if, after further review, participation in the Wildfire Relief Fund is found to have a net benefit to KIUC and its rate-payer members. Amendment 4 gives KIUC parity with HECO in allowing the utility to recover fund contribution costs from its customers in rates, unless the public utilities commission directs otherwise.

In summary, we ask that you fully evaluate the potential impacts to KIUC in your decision-making.

Thank you for your consideration.

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MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 229
Friday, February 9, 2024 AT 9:30 A.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
The Honorable Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

SUPPORT SB3344 RELATING TO WILDFIRES

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB3344.**

The Chamber supports the concept of this fund that helps protect impacted residents and businesses of future catastrophic wildfires by getting paid from the fund regardless of the cause of the wildfire. We acknowledge that it will help protect state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund from financial uncertainty due to the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. However, we note that residents and businesses that will benefit from this fund will also be contributors to this fund through state taxes, other governmental taxes, and as ratepayers of utility companies. We all must come together on solutions when dealing with catastrophic events.

We appreciate the forward thinking of this initiative. We hope the state will continue to explore federal and other funding methods for expediting protective measures to help lessen the impacts of future disasters.

The Chamber looks forward to continued discussions on this and other related bills to find the best possible solutions.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB3344.**

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.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Alden Ishii

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alden Ishii and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 31 years. Having worked for the company in middle management (Engineering, Power Plant, and Safety). I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Lyle J. Matsunaga

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lyle J. Matsunaga and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and Maui Electric and was employed there for over 19 years. Having worked for the companies as a Director, Finance and as a Manager, Accounting, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The companies have provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The companies continue to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Christopher Reynolds

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christopher Reynolds and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 24 years. Having worked for the company as the Operational Technology Director, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Noreen Takeshita

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Noreen Takeshita and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 10:47:43 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It appears this bill is the same as HB2700, which per Speaker Saiki was introduced at the request of HECO. This is a giveaway to HECO bill. HECO should not be allowed to charge ratepayers for its negligence. While the intent is good, the devil is in the details. I urge you to defer this bill.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Sharon Suzuki

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sharon Suzuki and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 28 years. Having worked for the company in various positions, most recently as President, Maui County and Hawaii Island Utilities, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, like mine, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Linda Tait

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Linda Tait and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

As a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric, employed there for over 30 years, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Kerry Kanakaole

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kerry Kanakaole and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company as a(n) Apprentice Lineman, Lineman, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent of C&M, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:55:50 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Greg Demko

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Demko and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:46:36 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacklyn Spencer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM

State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Jacklyn D. Spencer

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jacklyn D. Spencer and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 25 years. Having worked for the company as a Clerk Dispatcher, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger

generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Jamie Lee

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jamie Lee and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company as an accountant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Karen Hirota

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Hirota and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 20 years. Having worked for the company as an executive assistant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Faith Duenas

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Faith Duenas and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Kelsey Ito

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kelsey Ito and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Kristin Nakamura

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristin Nakamura and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Earlylynne F. Maile

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Earlylynne Maile and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 35 years. Having worked for the company primarily as an Engineer, Project Manager and Planner, I am very proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, and run by leadership from Hawai`i.

The company has provided career opportunities for myself and others who grew up here in the islands. I went to college on the mainland and wanted to come back to Hawai`i to live and raise my family. Hawaiian Electric made that possible. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Lyanne Hiromoto

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lyanne Hiromoto and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 32 years. Having worked for the company, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:57:28 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Menor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to create a fund to provide property owners to receive assistance rapidly and efficiently to recover property damage from future catastrophic wildfire impacts, *no matter the cause*.

Thank you,

Tiffany Menor

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Michelle Orian-Lau

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Orian-Lau and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai'i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Donica Kaneshiro

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Donica Kaneshiro and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Debbie Watson-Correa

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Debbie Watson-Correa and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. Personally, I am grateful for the opportunity the company has provided for my great grand uncles, father and myself to work for a company that serves the state we love. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Tammy Takitani

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tammy Takitani and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 1:13:21 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Kurohara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is David Kurohara on behalf of and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. F

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Robert Young

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Robert Young and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 42 years. Having worked for the company as a(n) electrical engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Caryn Fukunaga

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Caryn Fukunaga and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Enrique Che

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Enrique Che and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 32 years. Having worked for the company as an engineer, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Dawn Wong

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dawn Wong and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Thurston Wong

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Thurston Wong and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Leslie Kwock

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Leslie Kwock and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. With the sad outcome of many other local companies closing after the pandemic, this local company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland, where the culture and environment does not have the same warmth as Hawai'i. I was born, raised and have a family here on O'ahu, being very grateful of this unique gift and opportunity from my parents. I would like to continue my family roots here, including the benefit of having as many local companies like Hawaiian Electric

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factors. While I hope what happened in West Mau'i never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provides Hawai'i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause – this resembles 'ohana where families are supportive and protective of each other and even extends beyond genetic bonds. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Kindly pass SB 3344. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Iris Eala

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Iris Eala and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric Company and was employed there for over 29 years. Having worked for the company in various positions and departments over the years, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawai`i.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation with an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai`i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Darren Yamamoto

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Darren Yamamoto and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 34 years. Having worked for the company as a lineman and in administration, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Lorie Nagata

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lorie Nagata and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 36 years. Having worked for the company in its finance and accounting area, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Patsy Nanbu

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patsy Nanbu and I am testifying **in support** of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 35 years. Having worked for the company in the accounting and regulatory areas, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii. As I experienced while working at the company for over three decades, Hawaiian Electric has and continues to be deeply committed to serving local families and businesses, providing jobs and giving back to the communities.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Everett A. Lacro

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Everett Lacro and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for 26 years. I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER & LAND AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lynne Unemori and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric, where I worked for more than 31 years.

SB 3344 provides an important way to support Hawai'i families in the event of another catastrophic wildfire. While all efforts are being made to prevent what happened in West Maui from ever occurring again, this bill helps ensure resources would be available if it does. SB 3344 would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai'i families with an efficient process for receiving resources to help recover from property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, regardless of the cause. This bill would also protect the credit of the state, counties, landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. In doing so, it would reduce the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. Reducing this uncertainty has a direct public benefit. For example, reducing financial uncertainty can help improve a utility's credit rating which would allow it to access cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid. Electric utility customers directly benefit from the savings of lower financing costs as well as from the actual grid improvements.

In fact, the interests of our community and the utility are very intertwined in many ways. I am proud to have been a part of one of the few remaining local companies in Hawai'i, led by local leadership and management. As I experienced for more than three decades at the company, Hawaiian Electric continues to be deeply committed to serving our local families and businesses, providing local jobs and giving back to our communities through charitable giving and community service.

Please support SB 3344 as a way to provide prompt resources to help our community if a catastrophic wildfire should ever occur again. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Jodi Borges

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jodi Borges and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Joanna Markle

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joanna Markle and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Yvonne Phillipson

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Yvonne Phillipson and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ken Ho and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric is generationally known and a foundational Hawaii company. It employs locals and has provided thousands of career opportunities for families who grew up here in the islands. The company continues to provide many opportunities for local families to live and work and remain in Hawaii.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Wendy Takara

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Wendy Takara and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Laura Rogers

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Laura Rogers and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires. Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Jason Anzai

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jason Anzai and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Timothy Lee

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Timothy Lee and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over eight years. I am also a retired employee of Verizon Hawaii with 24 years of service. Having worked for the company as a regulatory analyst, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii. Having also retired from Verizon Hawaii, I can share that the experience with the Carlyle Group to acquire Verizon Hawaii was not a positive one.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

Even if I were not a retiree of Hawaiian Electric, I would still support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**SB 3344
Relating to Wildfires**

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Darren Ishimura

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Darren Ishimura and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I support SB 3344 because it proposes a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While I hope what happened in West Maui never happens again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does.

This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawai'i families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners, and utilities that contribute to the fund. Reining in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires can, for example, help maintain an electric utility's positive credit rating and thus allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety, reliability, and resilience of its electrical grid. This ultimately will help the residents of Hawai'i.

Hawaiian Electric is deeply rooted in Hawai'i's communities. Therefore, it is in the public's interest for Hawaiian Electric to be able to raise the capital needed to invest in critical infrastructure. SB 3344 will support Hawaiian Electric's ability to dutifully serve electric customers on the islands of O'ahu, Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, and Lānai. Also, as one of Hawai'i's largest employers, Hawaiian Electric provides career opportunities for families who grew up here and continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands. Hawaiian Electric must remain financially viable for it to continue to do so.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Sharri Thornton
Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sharri Thornton on behalf of Hawaiian Electric and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. F

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share support.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 6:49:21 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Spake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for your review and consideration into passing this bill.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Ross Tanimoto

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ross Tanimoto and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Candice Lucas

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Candice Lucas and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. I can attest to this because my daughter moved to Washington state to afford housing and lower cost of living expenses.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Natalie Timbal

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Natalie Timbal and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Chris Villanueva

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chris Villanueva and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Teri Theuriet

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Teri Theuriet and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I was born and raised in Kāneʻohe and believe passage of SB 3344 is in the best interest of everyone in Hawaiʻi because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Michelle Koyanagi

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Koyanagi and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 17 years. Having worked for the company as an accountant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Christopher Schlueter

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christopher Schlueter testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a current employee of Hawaiian Electric, residing in Hilo. Since 2019, I have been proud to work for a company that tirelessly serves the needs of the Big Island community. I have witnessed the company and its employees bravely rise to meet challenges in the face of natural disasters including tropical storms, earthquakes, lava flows and wild fires.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Karen Kuis-Zelko

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Kuis-Zelko and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

SB 3344 is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Lorrie Iwanaga

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lorrie Iwanaga and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 32 years. Having worked for the company as an executive assistant, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

SB-3344

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 7:35:03 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/9/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
scott cramer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony before the SENATE

committee on COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM

State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Scott Cramer

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Scott Cramer and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and

provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Joanne Williamson

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joanne Williamson and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any factor. This bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available when a catastrophic fire occurs.. This bill creates a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

This bill creates a template for recovery efforts for all types of natural disaster.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Karin Kimura

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karin Kimura, a long-time resident on O‘ahu, and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland, helping to reduce “brain drain” in Hawai‘i.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill’s purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility’s positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support for this bill.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Jason Cosma

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jason Cosma and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Stacey Ueda

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stacey Ueda and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Kristen Okinaka

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristen Okinaka and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Nancy Kelly

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nancy Kelly and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Howard Kelly

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Howard Kelly and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Carlos Perez

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carlos Perez and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause.

In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Kristie Calicdan

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristie Calicdan and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Kenneth Chan

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kenneth Chan and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Mark Shimabukuro

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mark Shimabukuro and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Lori Yafuso

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lori Yafuso and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 22 years. Having worked for the company as a(n) IT Program Manager, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Christine Jade Fe Benito

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Jade Fe Benito and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Stacey Ishihara

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stacey Ishihara and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric is a local company comprised of employees that live in Hawaii and are members of our communities. They have been a part of Hawaii for over 130 years. Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities, supported many community events and sponsored many activities for the schools in Hawaii. Most importantly, the company provides our younger generation with an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. Having locally owned companies, like Hawaiian Electric, allows the people of Hawaii the opportunity to work with companies that understand the islands and are more willing to collaborate with them, because they are a part of them – the residents of Hawaii.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While I hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by William Chang

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is William Chang and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Michael Ishihara

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michael Ishihara and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric is a local company comprised of employees that live in Hawaii and are members of our communities. They have been a part of Hawaii for over 130 years. Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities, supported many community events and sponsored many activities for the schools in Hawaii. Most importantly, the company provides our younger generation with an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland. Having locally owned companies, like Hawaiian Electric, allows the people of Hawaii the opportunity to work with companies that understand the islands and are more willing to collaborate with them, because they are a part of them – the residents of Hawaii.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While I hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Alvin Kurisu

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alvin Kuriu and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by **Michael T Iwahashi**

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michael T Iwahashi and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 33 years. Having worked for the company as a Lineman / Troubleshooter / Foreman / Asst Superintendent, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Lon Okada

Dear Chairs Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga and Members of the Committees,

My name is Lon Okada and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I retired from Hawaiian Electric Industries and was employed there for over 37 years, including six years at Hawaiian Electric. Having worked for the company in the finance area, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for many who grew up here in the islands and continues to provide our younger generation with an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope what happened in West Maui never occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to mitigate the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, this bill would help bolster a utility's positive credit rating and allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

I am a resident of Oahu, a citizen of the State of Hawaii, and a residential consumer of electric power provided by HECO. I am testifying in strong OPPOSITION to SB 3344.

On its face this legislation appears to be an example of “crony capitalism” that seeks to transfer risk from HECO and its successors to the taxpayers and ratepayers of Hawaii. According to news reports, HECO’s current predicament may stem in large part from an incredibly stupid failure to properly insure itself against wildfire risks that were known, or should have been known, to its management. Furthermore, recent news coverage in CivilBeat suggests that serious conflicts of interest may exist at HECO that could hinder its ability to respond to this situation and to protect itself and Hawaii’s residents, ratepayers, and taxpayers from future such disasters. Before offering any aid to HECO the Legislature should ask HECO to respond to the following questions:

- (1) Why is this proposed legislation advantageous to Hawaii’s citizens, ratepayers, and taxpayers and not a blatant effort to insulate HECO from future liability?
- (2) Is HECO unable to purchase insurance like any other business enterprise to protect itself and its stakeholders IN ADVANCE from catastrophic losses of the kind likely to result from the Maui fires or similar such events in the future?
- (3) Has it been alleged in any pending litigation that HECO’s officers and/or Board of Directors were negligent in failing to adequately insure against the liability HECO may be facing?
- (4) If the answer to Question 3 is “Yes,” does that place HECO’s officers or Board members, or any of them, in a conflict-of-interest situation that requires their resignation, not mere recusal from Maui-related matters?
- (5) Does the status of the Chairman of HECO’s Board of Directors as CEO of an insurance company suing HECO place him in a conflict-of-interest situation that requires his resignation from his position at HECO, not his mere recusal from Maui-related matters?
- (6) Have HECO and its subsidiaries fully funded their pension and other obligations so that their employees will not lose benefits in the event HECO or any of its subsidiaries are unable to pay all costs imposed by pending litigation and are forced into bankruptcy?

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in OPPOSITION to this legislation.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Joyce Chang

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joyce Chang and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

I am a retired employee of Hawaiian Electric and was employed there for over 15 years. Having worked for the company as a Sr. Financial Administrator, I am proud to have been a part of the very few remaining local companies in the State, led by local management, run by leadership from Hawaii.

The company has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Kevin Kuo

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kevin Kuo and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Christopher Freitas

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christopher Freitas and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Michelle Zambetti

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Zambetti and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

SB 3344

Relating to Wildfires

February 9, 2024 at 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Room 229

Submitted by Phillip Gerwien

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Phillip Gerwien and I am testifying in support of SB 3344, Relating to Wildfires.

Hawaiian Electric has provided career opportunities for our families who grew up here in the islands, and for some, a family legacy of generations. The company continues to provide our younger generation an opportunity to live and work in the islands, rather than having to move to the mainland.

I support SB 3344 because it is proposing a future solution in the event of another catastrophic wildfire that could be caused by any unknown factor. While we hope nothing like what happened in West Maui ever occurs again, this bill is being proposed to ensure resources would be available if it does. This bill would create a future wildfire relief fund for potential victims and provide Hawaii families with an efficient process for recovering property damage from a future catastrophic wildfire, no matter the cause. In addition, this bill would protect the creditworthiness of the state, counties, large landowners and utilities that contribute to the fund. This bill's purpose is to rein in the financial uncertainty created by the risk of future catastrophic wildfires. For example, a utility's positive credit rating would allow them access to cost-effective financing to improve the safety and reliability of its electrical grid.

Please pass SB 3344 and thank you for the opportunity to share my support.