

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14 2025

RE: S.B. No. 11
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Water and Land and Commerce and Consumer Protection, to which was referred S.B. No. 11 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to reduce wildfire risk by establishing a vegetation management program as it relates to public utility lines that:

- (1) Defines property owner obligations, which in limited circumstances will authorize the State's utility companies to either trim or remove hazardous vegetation away from transmission utility lines, distribution utility lines, and service drops, even if the hazardous vegetation is located outside an established easement; and
- (2) Provides a recovery mechanism to recoup the additional vegetation management costs.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Climate Advisory Team, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1260, Hawaiian Electric, and Lāhainā Strong.



Your Committees received testimony in opposition to this measure from the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies.

Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Consumer Advocacy of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Public Utilities Commission, Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative, and Kamehameha Schools.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language that exempts a utility company from any liability arising from its performance including any damage caused to other vegetation or property by the utility company while trimming or removing hazardous vegetation on a private or public property owner's land;
- (2) Inserting language that exempts a utility company from any liability for any failure to determine the existence of hazardous vegetation on private or public property;
- (3) Inserting language that exempts a utility company from liability if the utility company refrains from trimming or removing hazardous vegetation;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of June 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Water and Land and Commerce and Consumer Protection that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 11, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 11, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committees on Ways and Means and Judiciary.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Water and Land
and Commerce and Consumer
Protection,



JARRETT KEOHOKALOPE, Chair



LORRAINE R. INOUÉ, Chair



