

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1562

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 02 2025

RE: S.R. No. 120
S.D. 1

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

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, to which was referred S.R. No. 120 entitled:

"SENATE RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL TO CONVENE A VEGETATION MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP TO STUDY, EVALUATE, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGULATIONS THAT DEFINE PROPERTY OWNER OBLIGATIONS FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY TO MITIGATE WILDFIRE RISK,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to request the Office of the State Fire Marshal to convene a Vegetation Management Working Group to study, evaluate, and make recommendations for regulations that define property owner obligations for vegetation management on public and private property to mitigate wildfire risk.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Public Utilities Commission, Hawaiian Electric, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1260.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from Life of the Land.



Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and Hawaiian Telcom.

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Your Committee finds that the tragedy and devastation of the 2023 Maui wildfires underscored the urgent need for comprehensive vegetation management in the State to prevent another disaster from occurring. Vegetation management, including the creation of firebreaks and the removal of buildup of flammable vegetation, is essential for the mitigation of wildfire risks and the promotion of safer conditions for the community and the environment. Accordingly, this measure requests the convening of a Vegetation Management Working Group (Working Group) to address the wildfire risks posed by uncontrolled vegetation growth near electric utility lines in the State by analyzing and making recommendations on the responsibilities of the owners of the property upon which the uncontrolled vegetation exists. Your Committee requests that as a part of this analysis, the Working Group review the practices of other states, including Washington and Oregon.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Working Group is requested to study, evaluate, and make recommendations for regulations that define the respected obligations of property owners, lessees, licensees, permittees, and holders of easements for access, utility, or other purposes;
- (2) Clarifying that the Working Group is requested to make recommendations that define a line clearance tree trimmer and establish minimum safety standards, training, and qualifications for individuals performing line clearance tree trimming at or near electric utility facilities;
- (3) Removing the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations as an alternative to the State Fire Marshal as the chairperson of the Working Group and replacing them with the Adjutant General;



- (4) Adding the Superintendent of Education, or the Superintendent's designee, to the Working Group;
- (5) Adding the Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, or the Chairperson's designee, to the Working Group;
- (6) Removing a representative of a telecommunications carrier from the list of entities invited to participate in the Working Group;
- (7) Clarifying that the Department of Defense rather than the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations is requested to provide administrative support to the Working Group;
- (8) Amending the transmittal list of recipients of certified copies of this measure accordingly;
- (9) Adding legislative findings;
- (10) Amending the title of the measure accordingly; and
- (11) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.R. No. 120, as amended herein, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto as S.R. No. 120, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Public Safety and
Military Affairs,



BRANDON J.C. ELEFANTE, Chair



