

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
WAYS AND MEANS
and
JUDICIARY**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2025
10:05 AM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Via Videoconference

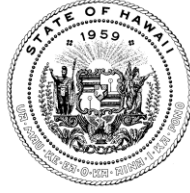
**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 11, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES**

Senate Bill 11, Senate Draft 1 requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to create and update annually a wildfire hazard map. Requires private and public property owners to trim grasses within certain proximities of public rights of way and utility lines. Authorizes electric utility companies to enter private or public property to trim or remove hazardous vegetation. Appropriates funds. **The Department appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following two recommendations.**

1. Responsibility for vegetation management should fall on the easement holder (utility companies), not private property owners. Utility easements exist to provide space for infrastructure and are granted to utilities with the understanding that they will maintain them. Shifting the burden to private property owners for maintenance on easement land is impractical and unjustified when property owners do not control the utility infrastructure placed on their land. California's vegetation management laws (California Public Utilities Commission General Order 95, Rule 35) put the responsibility for utility line vegetation maintenance squarely on the utility companies, requiring them to maintain specified clearances. Hawai'i should adopt a similar standard. Utility companies are better equipped with the resources, personnel, and expertise to manage vegetation around power lines and should be held accountable for its maintenance.

2. Enforcement should be assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal or County Fire Departments based on whether the easement is on state-owned or private land. SB11 assigns enforcement authority to the Department, an agency whose primary role is land and natural resource management, not fire code enforcement. The Office of the State Fire Marshal is the appropriate enforcement body for fire prevention regulations on state land, including vegetation management for fire safety. County fire departments already enforce vegetation-related fire codes on private land, and they should continue doing so with the assistance of the State Fire Marshal if needed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
And
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Wednesday, February 26, 2025
10:05 a.m.
Conference Room 211

On the following measure:
S.B. 11, S.D. 1, RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committees:

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

The purpose of this bill is to: (1) require the Department of Land and Natural Resources to create and annually update a wildfire hazard map; (2) require private and public property owners to trim grasses within certain proximities of public rights of way and utility lines; (3) authorize electric utility companies to enter private or public property to trim or remove hazardous vegetation; (4) exempt electric utility companies from liability for certain damages to other vegetation and property caused during the removal of hazardous vegetation; and (5) appropriate funds.

The tragedy and devastation of the August 8, 2023 wildfires on Maui must be prevented from reoccurring. The Department supports the intent of this bill, which seeks to reduce risk from catastrophic wildfires by requiring vegetation management on a seasonal basis and if hazardous vegetation poses a serious threat to life and property.

The Department offers that more investigation is needed into the best practices for vegetation management to prevent wildfire risk at different levels of the electrical grid (transmission and distribution). The most appropriate entities for ensuring compliance with best practices for vegetation management to prevent wildfire risk and to have responsibility for undertaking vegetation management action should be determined as part of this investigation. Any investigation into best practices for vegetation management should also consider the wildfire mitigation actions that were proposed as part of the Hawaiian Electric Company's Climate Adaptation Transmission and Distribution Resilience Program in Docket No. 2022-0135 and the electric utilities' (including Kauai Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC)) hazard mitigation plans that were filed with the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on August 22, 2024. Such plans were filed as part of a non-docketed proceeding under Case No. 2023-04661.

In addition, on January 10, 2025, the Hawaiian Electric Company submitted its Wildfire Safety Strategy for the Commission's and the Department's review in Case No. 2023-04661, and on January 28, 2025, KIUC also submitted its plan in the same case. Hawaiian Electric Company's wildfire plan will be reviewed before the Commission in Docket No. 2025-0156. The Department believes that it is important to incorporate the results of this review into best practices for vegetation management near electrical lines.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
465 S. KING STREET, #103
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

LEODOLOFF R. ASUNCION, JR.
CHAIR

NAOMI U. KUWAYE
COMMISSIONER

COLIN A. YOST
COMMISSIONER

Telephone: (808) 586-2020
Facsimile: (808) 586-2066

Website: puc.hawaii.gov
E-mail: puc@hawaii.gov

Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the
Senate Committees on
Ways & Means
and
Judiciary

February 26, 2025
10:05 a.m.

Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Measure: S.B. No. 11, S.D. 1
Title: RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES.

Position:

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

Comments:

The Commission appreciates the intent of this measure to reduce wildfire risk by defining property owner and electric utility vegetation management obligations.

The Commission believes this measure could be improved by narrowing the scope to focus only on electric utility liability as it relates to vegetation management. The measure should clearly state that electric utilities are immune from liability for cutting or removing vegetation adjacent to electric facilities only if (1) the vegetation has come in contact with or caused damage to electric facilities; (2) the vegetation poses an imminent hazard to the general public health, safety, or welfare and the electric utility provides reasonable notice to the resident or property owner; or (3) the vegetation poses a potential threat to damage electric facilities and the electric utility attempts written notice to the last known address of record.

In January 2025, Hawaiian Electric and Kauai Island Utility Cooperative ("KIUC") submitted their wildfire mitigation plans ("WMP") to the Commission in Case No. 2023-04661. The Commission opened Docket No. 2025-0156 on January 30, 2025 to evaluate

Hawaiian Electric's WMP and another docket focused on KIUC's WMP will be opened shortly. The Commission will incorporate the results of these reviews into best practices for vegetation management near electrical lines. The Commission intends to eventually establish minimum vegetation clearance requirements for electric utilities in its administrative rules with input from the State Fire Marshal, pursuant to the "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report by the Fire Safety Research Institute.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the Senate Committees on
Ways and Means & Judiciary

In Consideration of Senate Bill No. 11 SD1
RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES.

To Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard and the honorable members of the committees,

We are writing on behalf of Lāhainā Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 35,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

Lāhainā Strong, stands in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1** which establishes clear vegetation management responsibilities and ensures that all property owners-private and public-are held accountable for maintaining their land. Unfortunately, our community knows all too well the devastation wildfires bring. We have seen firsthand the consequences of unchecked hazardous vegetation, unclear responsibility, and weak enforcement. We cannot afford to let history repeat itself—here or anywhere in the state.

This bill provides necessary structure and enforcement. Wildfire risk is not just a theoretical concern; it is a life-threatening reality that demands immediate action. Private landowners must be required to clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high- and medium-risk fire zones. Too often, lands go unmanaged, overgrown with dry brush that turns into kindling in the wrong conditions. Without enforcement, this negligence continues to endanger surrounding communities.

Utility companies should not be forced to take on the burden of clearing vegetation outside of their easements or public rights of way, but they must have the right to remove hazardous vegetation when landowners fail to act. This bill ensures that when necessary, that work can be done at the landowner's expense—because inaction has consequences.

Public agencies also have a role to play in managing vegetation along roadsides and rights of way. Fires spread rapidly when brush and overgrowth are left unchecked along public lands. It is not enough to acknowledge the risk—we must act to mitigate it.

This bill is a step toward real wildfire prevention, but its effectiveness will depend on enforcement. Without clear penalties and strong follow-through, the same conditions that fueled the Lāhainā fire will persist. We urge the Legislature to **support Senate Bill 11 SD1** and to ensure that enforcement remains a priority. Lives, homes, and communities depend on it.

Mahalo for your time and leadership in addressing this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

Lāhainā Strong



**Hawaiian
Electric**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
WAYS & MEANS AND JUDICIARY**

**SB11, SD1
Relating to Vegetation Management Near Utility Lines**

Wednesday, February 26, 2025
10:05 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Wendy Oda
Manager, Land & Rights of Way
Hawaiian Electric

Aloha Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Wendy Oda and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in **strong support** of SB11, SD1, and appreciate the amendments that were adopted by the previous committee.

Establishing a comprehensive statewide vegetation management program will help reduce wildfire risks across the state and Hawaiian Electric believes that SB11, SD1 is a good first step towards that goal. Authorizing electric utility companies to use their discretion to enter public and private properties to perform vegetation management around electric utility lines, and limiting the companies' liability for property damage caused by such actions, will support an effective vegetation management program and is also in the public interest.

In the event of an emergency or imminent threat of wildfire ignition near power lines, however, a utility company may not have time to give landowner's forty-eight hours' advance notice of the need for entry onto their property. Under such circumstances, safety is of utmost importance and a utility company will need to gain immediate entry to respond to the threat, to protect its infrastructure, and to keep the general public safe.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025

Joint Senate Committee on Ways and Means and Judiciary

HEARING DATE: Wednesday, February 26, 2025

TIME: 10:05 a.m.

PLACE: Senate Committee Room 211

RE: Senate Bill 11 SD1- **SUPPORT with Amendments**

Aloha Honorable Chair(s) Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice-Chair(s) Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Joint Committee Members;

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1260 (IBEW 1260) would like to offer the following testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 11 SD1 with proposed amendments.

IBEW Local 1260, is comprised of approximately 3,000 members throughout Hawaii and Guam and consists of a diverse and highly-skilled workforce that supports the electric utility infrastructure across our state as well as government service contracts and broadcasting. It's our duty to serve and to protect the well-being of our members, but beyond that, it is incumbent upon all of us to serve and protect the well-being of our island home.

SB11 SD1 requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to create and annually update a wildfire hazard map, requires private and public property owners to trim grasses within certain proximities of public rights of way and utility lines, and authorizes electric utility companies to enter private or public property to trim or remove hazardous vegetation.

IBEW Local 1260 supports SB11 SD1 that will significantly reduce the likelihood of another catastrophic wildfire by establishing and implementing wildfire mitigation policies consistent with other jurisdictions where similar such events occur. In doing so, we must also ensure the safety of the public and those performing this extremely hazardous work.

As such, we respectfully submit the following proposed amendments for consideration and inclusion in a subsequent draft, seeking consistency and compliance with national minimum safety standards, and more importantly, to ensure that vegetation management work near high voltage transmission and/or distribution lines are performed by a properly trained and qualified workforce to protect the safety of the public and of the worker.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

Proposed Amendments offered by: IBEW1260

SB11 SD1 RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that on August 8, 2023, catastrophic wildfires swept through various communities on Maui. The wildfires impacted human life, the community, housing, education, the economy, the environment, and the health of Maui residents. The legislature further finds that a significant issue regarding fire safety is the presence of grasses, trees, and other vegetation adjacent to or under electric utility lines. Utility companies in Hawaii have miles of utility lines installed throughout the State on private lands, either within or outside established utility easements on public lands, which are often located in the public right of way and mountainous areas of the State. Recognizing this issue, the legislature proposes to establish a vegetation management program for utility lines within public rights of way and on all public and private lands.

The purpose of this Act 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 Hawaii'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.

SECTION 2. Chapter 269, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§269- Vegetation management; utility lines; wildfire hazard map; hazardous vegetation; property owner obligations; utility company rights. (a) The department of land and natural resources shall create and annually update a single wildfire hazard map that identifies high-risk, medium-risk, and low-risk wildfire areas in each county.

(b) Unless otherwise stated in contractual documents:

(1) A utility company shall not be obligated to trim or remove trees and other vegetation located within the utility company's easements or within a public right of way;

(2) A utility company shall not be obligated to trim or remove trees and other vegetation located outside of the utility company's easements or outside of a public right of way;



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

(3) Any private and public property owner shall be responsible for the maintenance of their property and shall manage the growth of trees, grasses, and other vegetation located thereon, either within or outside of a utility company's easements, to mitigate the risk of wildfire ignition on or adjacent to the private or public property owner's property;

(4) A utility company shall not be considered a private or public property owner solely because it possesses easement rights that cross other private or public properties; and

(5) Public entities that own and maintain public rights of way shall be responsible for the maintenance of its public rights of way and shall manage the growth of trees, grasses, and other vegetation located thereon to mitigate the risk of wildfire ignition on or adjacent to public rights of way.

(c) From months _____ to _____, each year, any private or public property owner whose property is located in high- and medium-risk fire areas identified pursuant to subsection (a) shall trim grasses located on their property to create:

(1) A combustible-free space within twenty-five feet from the edge of any public right of way that is adjacent to or runs through the property; and

(2) A combustible-free space within ten feet from any utility line that crosses their property.

(d) During the months identified in subsection (c), the department may provide a private or public property owner with notice of a violation of subsection (c), a description of the condition that violates subsection (c), and request that the owner abate the violation within thirty days after the notice is mailed to the property owner. The notice provided under this subsection shall be sent by certified mail to the last known address of the private or public property owner identified on public land records associated with the subject property. If the private or public property owner has not abated the violation within thirty days after the notice mailing date, the department shall issue a fine of \$1,000 against the private or public property owner. Each day after the noticed thirty-day abatement period that a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

(e) During the months identified in subsection (c), a utility company may trim or remove hazardous vegetation on properties in high- and medium-risk fire areas identified pursuant to subsection (a); provided that in the utility company's reasonable commercial judgment, the hazardous vegetation poses a risk of falling into or interfering with the utility company's utility lines located on private property within or outside of the utility company's easement; provided further that



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

the utility company may trim or remove hazardous vegetation located on public land within or outside of the public right of way.

A utility company shall have a right of entry to enter private property or public property pursuant to this section. A utility company that trims or removes vegetation pursuant to this subsection that is located outside of its easement, where no easement exists, or within or outside of a public right of way, shall notify the private or public property owner of the utility company's intent to trim or remove the hazardous vegetation and a general location and description of the hazardous vegetation proposed to be trimmed or removed. If the private or public property owner:

(1) Fails to respond to the utility company's notice of its intent to trim or remove hazardous vegetation located on their property; or

(2) Does not abate the hazardous vegetation within thirty days after the notice mailing date, the utility company may enter the property in question and trim or remove the hazardous vegetation at the private or public property owner's expense. The notice provided under this subsection shall be sent by certified mail to the last known address of the private or public property owner identified on public land records associated with the subject property.

(f) If a utility company reasonably determines that hazardous vegetation poses an imminent risk of wildfire ignition and reasonably believes that the hazardous vegetation must be trimmed or removed as soon as feasibly possible, the utility company may enter private or public property after giving forty-eight hours' notice and may trim or remove the hazardous vegetation. After trimming or removing the hazardous vegetation pursuant to this subsection, the utility company shall notify the private or public property owner of the action taken within two days of the action taken. The utility company shall provide the notices required under this subsection by phone call, email, or, if both are unobtainable, certified mail to the last known address of the private or public property owner identified on public land records associated with the subject property. All utility companies shall regularly report on the notices issued under this subsection to the public utilities commission on a schedule to be determined by the commission.

(g) If a utility company trims or removes hazardous vegetation pursuant to subsection (e), the utility company shall be immune from any liability arising from the utility company's performance, either by itself or through others, of any work authorized pursuant to subsection (e), including but



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

not limited to any damage caused to other vegetation or property caused in whole or in part by the utility company's actions, acting by itself or through others.

(h) A utility shall not be liable for any failure to determine the existence of hazardous vegetation on private or public property that is located within or outside the utility company's easements or within or outside a public right of way. A utility company that does not trim or remove hazardous vegetation pursuant to subsections (e) and (f) shall be immune from any liability associated with the utility company's decision to refrain from doing so.

(i) All work performed under this section shall be paid no less than the prevailing wage rate for a second-step apprentice electrical utility lineman as determined by the director of labor and industrial relations, and shall be performed:

(1) By a qualified line clearance tree trimmer or an apprentice under the direct supervision and instruction of a qualified line clearance tree trimmer pursuant to 29 C.F.R. section 1910.269 and American National Standards Institute Z133.1 safety standard; or

(2) By a journeyman electrical lineman or apprentice under the direct supervision and instruction of a journeyman electrical lineman.

[(+)](j) For purposes of this section:

"Department" means the department of land and natural resources.

"Hazardous vegetation" means any tree or shrub or other vegetation located within or outside of an existing easement or located within or near a public right of way that poses an imminent threat of interfering with or damaging electric utility lines located within or outside an existing easement or within the public right of way.

"Line Clearance Tree Trimmer" means an individual of at least eighteen years of age who has successfully completed a state-approved Line Clearance Tree Trimmer apprenticeship program and who can provide satisfactory evidence of experience in high voltage line clearance tree trimming of at least one and one-half years full-time or its equivalent, but not less than three thousand hours, in the trade under the supervision of a journey worker or supervising line clearance tree trimmer.

"Utility company" means any company operating in the State to provide electricity service and is regulated by the public utilities commission."



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1260 EMPOWERING THE PACIFIC

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the purposes of this Act.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on June 1, 2050.

Report Title:

DLNR; Vegetation Management Program; Public Utility Lines; Wildfire Hazard Map; Hazardous Vegetation; Property Owner Obligations; Utility Company Rights; Fines; Appropriations

Description:

Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to create and annually update a wildfire hazard map. Requires private and public property owners to trim grasses within certain proximities of public rights of way and utility lines. Authorizes electric utility companies to enter private or public property to trim or remove hazardous vegetation. Exempts electric utility companies from liability for certain damages to other vegetation and property caused during the removal of hazardous vegetation. Appropriates funds. Effective 6/1/2050. (SD1



Testimony of the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group: SB 11 SD1

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

10:05 AM

Room 211

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) is a cross-sector collaborative interested in strengthening climate and health resiliency in Hawai'i.

Testimony in Support of S.B. No. 11 – Relating to Vegetation Management Near Utility Lines

To: Chair and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 11, relating to vegetation management near utility lines. This bill addresses an urgent need to reduce the risk of wildfires, particularly after the catastrophic events in Maui in August 2023.

The bill takes a proactive approach by establishing a comprehensive vegetation management program that focuses on utility lines within public rights of way and both public and private lands. It aims to mitigate the risk of wildfires igniting from hazardous vegetation near utility lines, which is crucial for safeguarding homes, businesses, and the health of Hawai'i's residents.

We are supportive of this bill because it ensures that property owners, both public and private, are responsible for maintaining their properties and managing vegetation that may pose a fire hazard. By clearly defining the responsibilities of property owners, the bill helps foster accountability, accountability in return helps to ensure that fire prevention measures are completed. Furthermore, the creation and annual updating of a wildfire hazard map by the Department of Land and Natural Resources will serve as a valuable resource for identifying high-risk areas, making sure they are recognized and adequately protected, and preparing for possible wildfire events.

This bill is an important step in protecting the health of the people of Hawai'i. Wildfires have many health implications, some of which are often overlooked. The effects of smoke from wildfires can cause respiratory irritation, reduced lung function, bronchitis, and exacerbation of asthma and heart failure. Furthermore, during the event of a wildfire, structures have the potential to burn and then fall onto important roadways, thus people are at risk of limited and restricted access to proper health care. This bill provides a way in which Hawai'i can mitigate the risk of wildfires, as well as the protection of communities at risk, thus, preventing the health impacts of wildfires.

This bill overall provides a sensible and necessary response to the growing threat of wildfires in Hawaii. By addressing the role of vegetation near utility lines in fire, this bill significantly enhances our ability to protect our communities, their health, their access to healthcare, as well as the well-being of the environment and property in Hawai'i.

We urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 11 in order to take an important step toward reducing wildfire hazards across the state and ensuring that our residents are protected in the future.

The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

The Climate Change and Health Working Group



Testimony Before the Senate Committees on Ways and Means and Judiciary

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

Wednesday, February 26, 2025; 10:05 am
Conference Room #211 & Videoconference

Senate Bill No. 11 SD1 - RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES

To the Honorable Chairs Donovan M. Dela Cruz and Karl Rhoades, Vice Chairs Sharon Y. Moriwaki and Mike Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

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 supports this measure as amended.

KIUC strongly agrees with the premise of this bill that a robust vegetation management program, particularly around electric utility infrastructure, can significantly reduce the risk of wildfire. Historically, KIUC budgeted roughly \$1.2 million a year for this work. In 2024, KIUC spent \$2.1 million on its vegetation management program. That figure is estimated to reach \$3 million in 2025.

Contracted vegetation management crews are responsible for trimming trees and vegetation around energized power lines, utility-owned fiber optic cables, utility poles, and regulators to obtain the minimum required clearance. Beginning in 2024, KIUC adopted a vegetation management plan which provides guidance for contract line clearance tree crews clearing and pruning trees year-round, aiming to re-clear the co-op's power line rights of way on each circuit systematically on a five-year cycle.

KIUC maintains over 970 miles of overhead right of way. This includes not only the maintenance of the hardware, conductors, and poles, but also trees and other vegetation that threaten to fall or grow into the powerlines. ROW maintenance is focused on providing recommended clearances between vegetation and conductors, and not on maintaining growth along the ground, below the powerlines, since grasses and bushes, and even short trees, are well outside of the required contact clearance area.

Requiring landowners to manage the growth of trees, grasses, and other vegetation, and provide a combustible-free space within ten feet from any utility line that crosses their property, will make a significant contribution to mitigating the risk of wildfire ignition around utility poles and lines.

KIUC also appreciates the intent of sections in the bill that would allow the utility to enter private or public property to trim or remove hazardous vegetation should the property owner fail to do so. While there may be circumstances where such hazards come to the attention of KIUC and action might be taken, we do not consider that this bill creates an obligation for KIUC to proactively search for, identify and remove hazardous vegetation from private or public property. We agree with amendments to the bill that provide exemptions from liability for utility companies in the performance and non-performance of vegetation management on private or public property.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**TESTIMONY OF EVAN OUE ON BEHALF OF THE HAWAII
ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE (HAJ) IN OPPOSITION TO
SB 11**

Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Time: 10:05 a.m.

My name is Evan Oue and I am presenting this testimony on behalf of the Hawaii Association for Justice (HAJ) in **OPPOSITION** to **SB 11, RELATING TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEAR UTILITY LINES.**

HAJ opposes SB 11 which: 1) 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) exempts a utility company from any liability for any failure to determine the existence of hazardous vegetation on private or public property; and 3) exempts a utility company from liability if the utility company refrains from trimming or removing hazardous vegetation.

Immunity from liability is bad public policy and removes accountability for utility companies to ensure and maintain vegetation on their easements. Specifically, for SB 11 there is no justification to provide immunity for the utility company when trimming or maintaining an easement or vegetation around a utility pole. Liability immunity only benefits the utility company and allows them to negligently perform their duties at the cost to the property owner, who already is being forced to provide the utility company an easement in the first place.

Responsibility and liability for conducting maintenance in a reasonable way should fall on the utility company as the easement holder. Utility companies are better equipped with the resources, personnel, and expertise to manage vegetation around power lines and should be held accountable for its maintenance.

In turn, HAJ recommends eliminating immunity from liability for utility companies by removing sections (g) and (h). Further, the measure should be amended to reflect California's vegetation management laws (California Public Utilities Commission General Order 95, Rule 35) which put the responsibility for utility line vegetation maintenance squarely on the utility companies, requiring them to maintain specified clearances.

Thank you for allowing us to testify regarding this measure. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or desire additional information.

Testimony in Support of S.B. No. 11 – Relating to Vegetation Management Near Utility Lines

To: Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 11, relating to vegetation management near utility lines.

The bill takes a proactive approach by establishing a comprehensive vegetation management program that focuses on utility lines within public rights of way and both public and private lands. It aims to mitigate the risk of wildfires igniting from hazardous vegetation near utility lines, which is crucial for protecting homes, businesses, and most importantly the lives and health of the people of Hawai'i.

Wildfires have many health implications. The effects of smoke from wildfires can cause respiratory irritation, reduced lung function, bronchitis, and the exacerbation of asthma. Furthermore, during the event of a wildfire, burning structures have the potential to fall onto roadways, putting Hawaii communities at risk of limited and restricted access to proper health care.

Personally, many members of my family reside in areas like Wai'anae, where access is limited due to a small number of roadways in and out of the community. These areas are also surrounded by vast stretches of dry land, with significant amounts of dry vegetation that increase the risk of wildfires. Many of those family members suffer from asthma which could be exacerbated. I support this bill because of how it ensures the adequate prevention of Hawai'i communities, but also the adequate prevention of catastrophic events that could heavily impact the health of my family and my people.

I am particularly supportive of this bill because it ensures that property owners, both public and private, are responsible for maintaining their properties and managing vegetation that may pose a fire hazard. By clearly defining the responsibilities of property owners, the bill helps foster accountability, accountability in return helps to ensure that fire prevention measures are completed. Furthermore, I believe that the creation and annual updating of a wildfire hazard map by the Department of Land and Natural Resources will serve as a valuable resource for identifying high-risk areas, ensuring they are recognized and adequately protected, and preparing for possible wildfire events.

This bill provides a sensible and necessary response to the growing threat of wildfires in Hawaii. By addressing the role of vegetation near utility lines in fire, this bill significantly enhances our ability to protect Hawai'i communities, including those in which my family resides, in the event of a wildfire.

I urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 11 to take an important step toward reducing wildfire hazards across the state and ensuring that Hawai'i residents are better protected.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Mehana Kapoi

Undergraduate at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa

Intern for the Climate Change and Health Working Group

mehana.kapoi@gmail.com

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:37:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James McCallen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 11, relating to vegetation management near utility lines. This bill addresses an urgent need to reduce the risk of wildfires, particularly after the catastrophic events in Maui in August 2023.

The bill takes a proactive approach by establishing a comprehensive vegetation management program that focuses on utility lines within public rights of way and both public and private lands. It aims to mitigate the risk of wildfires igniting from hazardous vegetation near utility lines, which is crucial for safeguarding homes, businesses, and the health of Hawai'i's residents.

I am supportive of this bill because it ensures that property owners, both public and private, are responsible for maintaining their properties and managing vegetation that may pose a fire hazard. By clearly defining the responsibilities of property owners, the bill helps foster accountability, accountability in return helps to ensure that fire prevention measures are completed. Furthermore, the creation and annual updating of a wildfire hazard map by the Department of Land and Natural Resources will serve as a valuable resource for identifying high-risk areas, making sure they are recognized and adequately protected, and preparing for possible wildfire events.

This bill is an important step in protecting the health of the people of Hawai'i. Wildfires have many health implications, some of which are often overlooked. The effects of smoke from wildfires can cause respiratory irritation, reduced lung function, bronchitis, and exacerbation of asthma and heart failure. Furthermore, during the event of a wildfire, structures have the potential to burn and then fall onto important roadways, thus people are at risk of limited and restricted access to proper health care. This bill provides a way in which Hawai'i can mitigate the risk of wildfires, as well as the protection of communities at risk, thus, preventing the health impacts of wildfires.

This bill overall provides a sensible and necessary response to the growing threat of wildfires in Hawai'i. By addressing the role of vegetation near utility lines in fire, this bill significantly

enhances our ability to protect our communities, their health, their access to healthcare, as well as the well-being of the environment and property in Hawai'i.

I urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 11 in order to take an important step toward reducing wildfire hazards across the state and ensuring that our residents are better protected in the future. **The climate crisis is a health crisis.**

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

James McCallen, MPH

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:51:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Werner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of S.B. No. 11 – Relating to Vegetation Management Near Utility Lines

To: Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emily Werner and I am a student at University of Hawaii Manoa. I am also a member of the Climate Change and Health Working Group.

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 11, relating to vegetation management near utility lines. This bill addresses an urgent need to reduce the risk of wildfires, particularly after the catastrophic events in Maui in August 2023.

The bill takes a proactive approach by establishing a comprehensive vegetation management program that focuses on utility lines within public rights of way and both public and private lands. It aims to mitigate the risk of wildfires igniting from hazardous vegetation near utility lines, which is crucial for safeguarding homes, businesses, and the health of Hawai'i's residents.

I am supportive of this bill because it ensures that property owners, both public and private, are responsible for maintaining their properties and managing vegetation that may pose a fire hazard. By clearly defining the responsibilities of property owners, the bill helps foster accountability, accountability in return helps to ensure that fire prevention measures are completed. Furthermore, the creation and annual updating of a wildfire hazard map by the Department of Land and Natural Resources will serve as a valuable resource for identifying high-risk areas, making sure they are recognized and adequately protected, and preparing for possible wildfire events.

This bill is an important step in protecting the health of the people of Hawai'i. Wildfires have many health implications, some of which are often overlooked. The effects of smoke from wildfires can cause respiratory irritation, reduced lung function, bronchitis, and exacerbation of

asthma and heart failure. Furthermore, during the event of a wildfire, structures have the potential to burn and then fall onto important roadways, thus people are at risk of limited and restricted access to proper health care. This bill provides a way in which Hawai'i can mitigate the risk of wildfires, as well as the protection of communities at risk, thus, preventing the health impacts of wildfires.

This bill overall provides a sensible and necessary response to the growing threat of wildfires in Hawai'i. By addressing the role of vegetation near utility lines in fire, this bill significantly enhances our ability to protect our communities, their health, their access to healthcare, as well as the well-being of the environment and property in Hawai'i.

I urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 11 in order to take an important step toward reducing wildfire hazards across the state and ensuring that our residents are better protected in the future. **The climate crisis is a health crisis.**

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Emily Werner

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:44:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1**, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your **support for SB11 SD1** and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:55:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Lomeli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1**, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your **support for SB11 SD1** and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Kathy Lomeli

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:58:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheylah	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1**, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your **support for SB11 SD1** and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Cheylah-Marie Uyeda

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:13:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carol lee kamekona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your support for SB11 SD1 and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Carol Lee Kamekona

Kahului, Maui

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:21:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Surace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1**, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your **support for SB11 SD1** and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Deborah Surace

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:33:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hege Hanssen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your support for SB11 SD1 and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Hege Hanssen

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:34:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorena Martinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your support for SB11 SD1 and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Lorena Martinez (W.Maui Resident)

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:02:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing in full support of SB11 SD1.

Mahalo

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:51:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Keahi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1**, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your **support for SB11 SD1** and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Christine Keahi

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:38:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ravi Bugga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your support for SB11 SD1 and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Ravi Bugga

Lahaina

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:40:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your support for SB11 SD1 and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Andrew Isoda

Lahaina, Mau'i

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:12:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
AUBREE TIPTON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

Personally it's been beyond frustrating over the years, to see thousands & thousands of dry vegetation go unchecked & unmaintained, especially considering the amount of wildfires we see here on Maui & all islands. The 2018 Lahaina fire was our biggest warning, & nothing was done. Nothing changed. The Nov 2022 fire above Lahaina was another giant warning, a sign of things to come; nothing was done, nothing changed. Less than a year later our town was gone. These property owners & companies need to be held responsible for vegetation maintenance & fire mitigation on their land. No other community should have to go through this ever again!

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your support for SB11 SD1 and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Aubree Tipton

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 12:02:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerald Tariao Montano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Gerald Montano, and I am a resident of Maui.

I am writing **in support** of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your support for SB11 SD1 and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Gerald Montano

Kahului, HI

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:23:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl hendrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 11 SD1, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:44:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for Senate Bill 11 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1**, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your **support for SB11 SD1** and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Pahnelopi McKenzie

SB-11-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:44:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 11 SD1**, which sets clear rules for vegetation management and holds property owners accountable for maintaining their land. Our community has seen the devastation wildfires cause, and we know that unchecked vegetation only makes things worse.

This bill makes sure private landowners clear hazardous vegetation, especially in high-risk fire areas, to prevent fires from spreading. If landowners don't take action, utility companies should be able to remove the dangerous vegetation at their expense.

Public agencies must also do their part by managing vegetation along roads and public land. This bill is an important step in wildfire prevention, but it needs strong enforcement to make sure the rules are followed.

We urge your **support for SB11 SD1** and ensure that enforcement is a priority to protect our communities.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Nalani A. From Lahaina