

MAR 16 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE COUNTY OF MAUI TO ADOPT ORDINANCES THAT ESTABLISH WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR PLANTATION TOWNS AND OTHER HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE COUNTY OF KAUAI'S ORDINANCE NO. PM-2025-425, RELATING TO THE PLANTATION CAMP DISTRICT WILDFIRE AND WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE, AND OTHER STATE AND NATIONAL WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE BEST PRACTICES.

1 WHEREAS, national research has shown that the
2 wildland-urban interface has expanded substantially over time,
3 increasing the number of homes and communities exposed to
4 wildfires, ember intrusion, and structure-to-structure fire
5 spread; and

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7 WHEREAS, states across the country have increasingly
8 responded to that expansion by adopting and amending codes and
9 ordinances to integrate home hardening, defensible space,
10 vegetation management, and wildfire risk mapping into local land
11 use and permitting decisions; and

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13 WHEREAS, for example, California applies ignition-resistant
14 construction standards in designated fire hazard severity zones
15 and wildland-urban interface areas, Colorado has required
16 jurisdictions in wildland-urban interface areas to adopt codes
17 meeting or exceeding statewide minimum wildfire resiliency
18 standards, Utah jurisdictions have adopted wildland-urban
19 interface codes governing home hardening and vegetation
20 management, and Arizona law expressly authorizes municipalities
21 to adopt current wildland-urban interface codes; and

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23 WHEREAS, in response to increasing wildfire risks, the
24 County of Kauai adopted Ordinance No. PM-2025-425 on
25 September 8, 2025, to advance wildfire mitigation in West
26 Kauai's Plantation Camp District; and

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28 WHEREAS, the County of Kauai ordinance requires new and
29 substantially remodeled buildings within the Plantation Camp
30 District wildland-urban interface area to incorporate wildfire
31 risk reduction measures, including home hardening standards

1 intended to reduce ember intrusion, a noncombustible zone
2 immediately surrounding structures, defensible space around
3 structures, and vegetation maintenance extending farther from
4 structures; and

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6 WHEREAS, the County of Kauai ordinance is significant
7 because it formally integrates wildfire safety into zoning,
8 permitting, and community design in a historic plantation town
9 setting, thereby offering a state-specific model for balancing
10 cultural preservation with modern fire safety; and

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12 WHEREAS, the County of Maui likewise contains historic
13 country towns and plantation-era communities where the built
14 environment, road pattern, lot configuration, vegetation,
15 topography, and exposure to wind-driven fire can create
16 dangerous plantation town wildland-urban interface conditions;
17 and

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19 WHEREAS, the County of Maui officially recognizes these
20 towns within its Country Town Business District framework, and
21 these communities provide useful examples of plantation town and
22 historic town conditions in which wildfire risk reduction
23 measures should be tailored to protect life, property, and
24 community character; and

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26 WHEREAS, like Lahaina, many historic plantation towns, such
27 as Paia and Makawao, retain elements of the plantation past
28 while continuing to function as living town centers, making
29 these communities especially relevant examples when considering
30 wildfire safety standards for the County of Maui's plantation
31 town wildland-urban interface areas; and

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33 WHEREAS, the 2023 Maui wildfires demonstrated with tragic
34 clarity that the County of Maui faces not only a wildland fire
35 threat, but also the threat of wildfire-driven urban
36 conflagration, as fire moved from surrounding wildland fuels
37 into Lahaina's neighborhoods and rapidly transformed into a
38 destructive urban firestorm; and

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40 WHEREAS, the 2023 Maui wildfires resulted in catastrophic
41 loss of life, homes, businesses, and irreplaceable cultural and
42 historic resources, and awakened the State and the County of



1 Maui to the urgent need to modernize ordinances, codes, and land
2 use practices to reflect the reality that wildfire and urban
3 firestorm development can occur together in Hawaii communities;
4 and
5

6 WHEREAS, the County of Maui's continued wildfire planning
7 efforts would be strengthened by the adoption and enforcement of
8 county ordinances that expressly address plantation town
9 wildland-urban interface conditions through locally tailored
10 standards for ember-resistant construction, noncombustible zones
11 near structures, defensible space, vegetation management, access
12 and water supply considerations, and integration of wildfire
13 risk into planning, permitting, and redevelopment decisions;
14 now, therefore,
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16 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
17 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
18 that the County of Maui is urged to adopt ordinances that
19 establish wildland-urban interface safety standards for
20 plantation towns and other high-risk communities, taking into
21 account the County of Kauai's Ordinance No. PM-2025-425,
22 relating to the Plantation Camp District Wildfire and Wildland
23 Urban Interface, and other state and national wildland-urban
24 interface best practices; and
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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in developing the requested
27 ordinances, the County of Maui is urged to consider standards
28 and procedures relating to ember-resistant and
29 ignition-resistant construction, noncombustible areas
30 immediately adjacent to structures, defensible space and
31 vegetation management requirements, wildfire risk mapping and
32 applicability thresholds, and the integration of wildfire
33 mitigation into zoning, permitting, redevelopment, and community
34 design review for historic and country town areas; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Maui is
37 encouraged to evaluate plantation town wildland-urban interface
38 conditions in its communities, and apply the lessons of the 2023
39 Maui wildfires to other communities in the County facing similar
40 wildfire and urban firestorm risks; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Mayor of the County
3 of Maui, Chair of the Maui County Council, Fire Chief of the
4 Department of Fire and Public Safety of the County of Maui,
5 Administrator of the Emergency Management Agency of the County
6 of Maui, and Director of the Department of Planning of the
7 County of Maui.

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10 OFFERED BY: 

