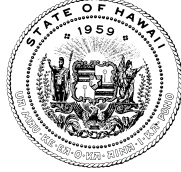


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ka Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o  
Hawai'i*

SYLVIA J. LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina  
'o Hawai'i*



KALI WATSON  
CHAIRPERSON, HHC  
*Ka Luna Ho'okele*

KATIE L. LAMBERT  
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR  
*Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele*

**LATE**

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS  
*Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawai'i*

P. O. BOX 1879  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 27, 2026, 9:09 am

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY  
ON MARCH 27, 2026 AT 10:00AM IN CR 411

**HR132 / HCR140, URGING STATE AGENCIES THAT OWN OR CONTROL LAND IN  
WEST MAUI TO IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE AGGRESSIVE VEGETATION  
MANAGEMENT, FUEL REDUCTION, DEFENSIBLE SPACE, AND EMERGENCY  
ACCESS MEASURES TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK TO LAHAINA AND  
SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES**

March 27, 2026

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this resolution urging State agencies that own or control land in West Maui to implement and enforce aggressive vegetation management, fuel reduction, defensible space, and emergency access measures to reduce wildfire risk to Lahaina and surrounding communities.

DHHL supports HB1800, HD1, which adds the Governor's budgeted \$2 million Green Fee award to DHHL for wildfire mitigation and community resilience initiatives serving Native Hawaiian homestead communities statewide. DHHL urgently needs these funds to address significant wildfire risks across its homelands. The 2023 Lahaina wildfire underscored the growing wildfire threat throughout Hawaii. Many DHHL subdivisions are located in high-risk areas and are surrounded by unmanaged fuels and dry vegetation. The Green Fee funding will support both large-scale land management strategies and homestead-based wildfire preparedness efforts.

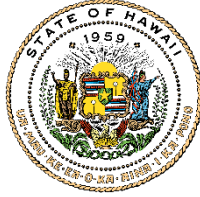
DHHL has identified five priority mitigation projects including maintenance of the Leiali'i Parkway landscape in Maui. These projects focus on fuel reduction, firebreak maintenance, erosion control, and vegetation management in high-risk DHHL homestead areas. The Green Fee will also support two community initiatives in partnership with the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO). First, a DHHL-dedicated Firewise Support Specialist will assist 15-20 homestead communities through the Firewise USA© certification process by providing technical assistance, risk assessments, workshops, and mitigation planning support. Second, DHHL will fund 10-15 Homestead Community-Led Wildfire Mitigation projects through grants of \$5,000-

\$10,000 per community for defensible space, brush clearing, vegetation removal, and evacuation route maintenance. Participating communities will form Firewise committees and contribute volunteer labor or in-kind support. These investments align with the goals of Act 96, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, to strengthen Hawaii's resilience to climate-driven disasters.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

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

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621  
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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  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on  
PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Friday March 27, 2026  
10:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE RESOLUTION 132  
and  
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 140**

House Resolution 132 and House Concurrent Resolution 140 urge state agencies that own or control land in West Maui to implement and enforce aggressive vegetation management, fuel reduction, defensible space, and emergency access measures to reduce wildfire risk to Lahaina and surrounding communities. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this resolution and offers the following comments.**

The Department supports the goals of proactive fuel reduction, defensible space, and improved ingress and egress, as these are critical components of a comprehensive wildfire risk reduction strategy and align with ongoing efforts across state and county agencies.

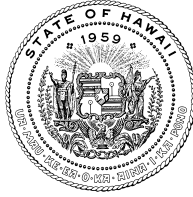
The Department of the Attorney General has contracted the Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization to develop a statewide wildfire action strategy based on recommendations from the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI). This effort represents a coordinated, science-based approach to wildfire risk reduction across Hawai'i. The Department recommends that the implementation of the actions contemplated in this resolution align with the FSRI recommendations and be guided by the upcoming statewide wildfire action strategy, which should serve as the baseline framework for prioritization and execution. Doing so will help ensure consistency across agencies, focus efforts on the highest-risk areas, and make the most effective use of limited resources.

Wildfire risk must be managed at a landscape scale. While the resolutions focus on agency-managed parcels, effective mitigation requires coordinated efforts among state, county, and private lands, as well as the establishment and long-term maintenance of strategic fuel treatments. The Department supports efforts that promote cross-boundary coordination and sustained management over time.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

### **HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of

### **DEAN MINAKAMI**

Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation  
Before the

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY**

March 27, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 411

In consideration of

### **HOUSE RESOLUTION 132 / HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 140 URGING STATE AGENCIES THAT OWN OR CONTROL LAND IN WEST MAUI TO IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE AGGRESSIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FUEL REDUCTION, DEFENSIBLE SPACE, AND EMERGENCY ACCESS MEASURES TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK TO LAHAINA AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.**

Chair Au Belatti, Vice Chair Coco Iwamoto, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports with comments** House Resolution 132 / House Concurrent Resolution 140, which urges state agencies that own or control land in West Maui to implement and enforce aggressive vegetation management, fuel reduction, defensible space, and emergency access measures to reduce wildfire risk to Lahaina and surrounding communities.

As noted in the measure, HHFDC controls substantial lands in the Lahaina area, including the Villages of Leialii, which encompass roughly 1,128 acres of state-owned land mauka of the Lahaina Civic Center.

Public safety is of utmost importance to HHFDC. We recognize the urgency of reducing hazardous vegetation and strengthening defensible space around residential communities, temporary housing areas for wildfire survivors, schools, and major evacuation routes. We are committed to working closely with the Office of the State Fire Marshal, DLNR, DHHL, DOE, DAGS, the County of Maui, and other partners to meet the expectations set forth in this resolution.

Since the 2023 wildfires, HHFDC has expanded firebreaks on our lands in Lahaina that border developed lands. We note, however, that maintenance of the firebreaks comes at additional cost, and implementing additional measures such as ground clearing and wide-scale vegetation management would require substantial dedicated funding and possibly additional field personnel and contract management staff.

With appropriate resources, HHFDC is prepared to support the full scope of the directives of this resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.