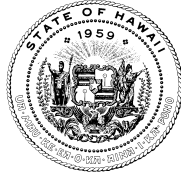


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
Hawaii*

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



KALI WATSON
CHAIRPERSON, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

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

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

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON APRIL 8, 2026 AT 2:00PM IN CR 308

SB17, SD2, HD1, RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION

April 8, 2026

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

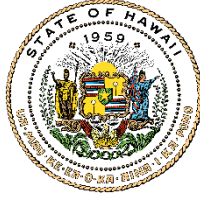
The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this bill which 1) establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, 2) requires a report to the Legislature, 3) requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the working group, 4) appropriates funds and 5) revises the appropriations made by Act 302, SLH 2025.

DHHL appreciates the inclusion of the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, or the Chairperson's designee in the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group. DHHL stands ready to chart a plan for safe and adequate evacuation routes, increase workforce development in land management and wildfire mitigation sectors, integrate food security, climate resilience initiatives, and cultural stewardship, as well as the other objectives of this Working Group.

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 HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Wednesday, April 8, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 17, SENATE DRAFT 2, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION

Senate Bill 17, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1, establishes a Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, requires the submission of a report to the Legislature, designates the Office of the Fire Marshal to provide administrative support, and appropriates funding for these purposes. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure as drafted.**

The Department supports the inclusion in Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1 of language aligning the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group with the State's ongoing Wildfire Action Strategy. This strategy is currently being developed under the Department of the Attorney General by the Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization and is informed by the Fire Safety Research Institute's findings.

The Department recommends that the Working Group use the forthcoming 2027 Wildfire Action Strategy as its guiding framework, focusing on coordination and implementation of established priorities rather than developing duplicative or potentially conflicting plans. A single, coordinated statewide roadmap will help ensure sustained wildfire preparedness and protection through effective multi-sector collaboration.

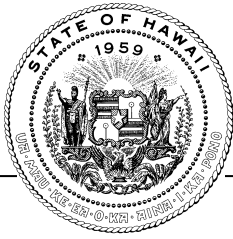
Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

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



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
SB 17, SD 2, HD 1
RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SB 17, SD 2, HD 1 establishing the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, attached to the Office of the State Fire Marshall to develop recommendations and report to the Legislature.

In recent years, our state has experienced tragic and devastating wildfire events that have underscored the urgent need for improved prevention, preparedness, land management, and cross-agency coordination. Wildfire risk is increasing due to drought conditions, invasive grasses, climate change, land management challenges, and development patterns. Addressing these risks requires a comprehensive, collaborative approach that brings together state and county agencies, fire professionals, landowners, utilities, and community stakeholders.

This measure is an important step forward by formalizing a working group to evaluate risk, identify best practices, improve mitigation strategies, and recommending policy and funding solutions. Proactive mitigation and planning are far more cost-effective than disaster response and recovery. Investing in coordination now will help protect lives, homes, infrastructure, watersheds, and local economies. The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development is pleased to serve as co-chair of this working group and support the Office of the State Fire Marshall in this endeavor.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on SB 17, SD 2, HD 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



MIKE LAMBERT
Director

ERNEST J. ROBELLO
Deputy Director
Administration

SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai
715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 17, SENATE DRAFT 2, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 308

Testifier: Dorothy Booth

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

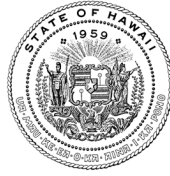
The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) provides comments on Senate Bill 17, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1. This bill establishes a Wildfire Mitigation Working Group tasked with developing comprehensive strategies to reduce wildfire risks across the State. The Working Group's scope encompasses tax incentives, land management practices, infrastructure improvements, workforce development, and grant funding opportunities. The bill further requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the Working Group, mandates a report to the Legislature on the group's findings and recommendations, and appropriates funds to support the group's administrative expenses.

Although OSFM supports the establishment of a dedicated Working Group, OSFM believes it could be established without a bill. OSFM is already working on addressing the suggested outcomes of this bill and suggests this measure be deferred at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments 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

JON S. ITOMURA
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
House Committee on
Finance

April 8, 2026
2:00 p.m.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Measure: S.B. No. 17, S.D. 2, H.D. 1
Title: RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION.

Position:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") supports this measure and offers the following comments for consideration.

Comments:

The Commission supports the intent of this measure to address the State's need for a multifaceted wildfire preparedness and mitigation strategy. The measure establishes and makes appropriations for a wildfire mitigation working group comprised of diverse stakeholders, requires a report of findings and recommendations to be submitted to the legislature prior to the 2028 session, and revises the funded positions for the office of the state fire marshal.

The Commission appreciates the most recent amendments to the measure requiring working group alignment with the ongoing Wildfire Action Strategy, adding the Insurance Commissioner and an electric utility representative as members, and requiring the working group to identify vegetation management obligations for public and private landowners.

On December 31, 2025, the Commission approved Hawaiian Electric's 2025-2027 Wildfire Mitigation Plan in Docket No. 2025-0156, representing a foundational effort to reduce utility-related ignition risk. The Commission is committed to aligning utility wildfire mitigation efforts with broader strategies that will be examined by the working group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Hawaiian
Electric**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**SB 17, SD2, HD1
Relating to Wildfire Mitigation**

Wednesday, April 8, 2026
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Hawaiian Electric is providing written testimony in **support** of SB 17, SD2, HD1, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation, which establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group within the Department of Law Enforcement and requires the Office of the Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the working group.

Hawaiian Electric believes that the formation of a Wildfire Management Working Group (“Working Group”), consisting of representatives of the State, the Counties, large private landowners and other stakeholders is a critical step in addressing the risk of future wildfires in the State. Hawaiian Electric supports the Working Group’s charge to identify deliverables related to regulations identifying the vegetation management obligations of public and private landowners.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in **support** of SB 17, SD2, HD1.



Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Finance

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026

Where: Conference Room 308

TESTIMONY

Kā'eo Duarte

Vice President, 'Āina Pauahi, Kamehameha Schools

RE: SB17, SD2, HD1, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation

Aloha e ka Luna Ho'omalua Todd, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Takenouchi, a me nā Lālā o ka Kōmike.

Kamehameha Schools appreciates this opportunity to **support** SB17, SD2, HD1. This measure aligns with our broader commitment to community resilience, rooted in Native Hawaiian values and grounded in the shared kuleana to care for both people and 'āina. We believe that wildfire mitigation is a collective responsibility that requires collaboration among communities, landowners, cultural practitioners, public agencies, and emergency responders, all working together toward common goals.

Wildfire resilience in Hawai'i cannot be achieved through individual action alone. It requires shared commitment, consistent standards, public education, and sustained partnerships across sectors. By fostering collaboration and advancing defensible standards and stewardship practices that reflect local conditions and cultural values, SB17, SD2, HD1 helps strengthen community safety, protect cultural landscapes, and promote long-term resilience statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your leadership on this critical issue. Kamehameha Schools remains committed to working alongside the Legislature and community partners to advance these shared priorities.

Founded in 1887 through the Will of Ke Ali'i Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop, Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha is a private, educational, charitable trust committed to empowering Native Hawaiians in perpetuity by improving the well-being of our people through education. We envision our haumāna, strong in E Ola!, grounded in Hawaiian and Christian values, succeeding in post-secondary education and contributing through 'ōiwi leadership to a thriving and self-determined lāhui.

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting SB17 SD2 HD1, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation
Committee on Finance
April 8, 2026 at 2:00 pm
Conference Room 308 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports SB17 SD2 HD1, which establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, requires a report to the Legislature, and requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the working group. Additionally, this bill revises the appropriations made by Act 302, SLH 2025.

Wildfires pose an escalating threat to our communities, natural resources, cultural landscapes, and economy. The 2023 Maui fires underscored the devastating consequences of unmanaged fuels, climate-driven drought, limited evacuation pathways, and gaps in land-use planning. As climate change intensifies, wildfire risk will continue to grow.

TNC has long recognized wildfires as a growing threat to native forest ecosystems in Hawai'i. These ecosystems are vital to watershed function and support much of the state's native biodiversity. As fire-adapted invasive grasses continue to spread and drought conditions intensify, wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe, placing increasing pressure on forests that are not naturally adapted to fire and are often replaced by invasive species after burning.

This bill takes an urgently needed, holistic approach by convening a diverse set of agencies, scientists, fire experts, land managers, economists, cultural practitioners, and community representatives. This type of cross-sector collaboration is essential to address the interconnected challenges of wildfire prevention, land stewardship, and community resilience. This bill develops incentives and funding tools for proactive land management, plans for safe communities, and strengthens the green-jobs workforce.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB17 SD2 HD1.

Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.

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SB-17-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:58:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Codelia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance:

My name is Edward Codelia. I am a resident of Maui and a candidate for House District 2, which includes all of Hawai‘i’s neighbor islands outside of O‘ahu. I submit this testimony in **opposition to SB17**, relating to the establishment of a Wildfire Mitigation Working Group.

Wildfire risk is one of the most serious public safety threats facing the neighbor islands today. The tragic loss of life and destruction in Lahaina demonstrated that wildfire risk in Hawai‘i is not theoretical. It is immediate, and it affects communities across Maui, Hawai‘i Island, Kaula‘i, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i.

However, the concern many residents have is that the State’s response continues to focus on creating new studies, task forces, and working groups rather than implementing mitigation work that has already been identified in previous reports.

For years, agencies and emergency management organizations have produced recommendations addressing wildfire risk in Hawai‘i. These recommendations consistently include fuel load reduction, vegetation management, firebreak construction, improved water system resilience, coordinated evacuation planning, and stronger interagency communication during emergencies. These issues are well documented.

Against that backdrop, creating another working group raises an obvious question for residents of the neighbor islands: what information is the State lacking that requires another study rather than implementation of known mitigation strategies?

Every year that passes without meaningful mitigation increases the risk to rural communities where large fuel loads, aging infrastructure, and limited emergency response capacity already exist. Residents on the neighbor islands are not asking for another report. They are asking for visible progress in reducing wildfire risk.

If the Legislature believes additional coordination is necessary, the bill should focus on implementation and accountability rather than study. Funding should be directed toward mitigation work such as vegetation management, firebreak construction, water system improvements, and emergency access infrastructure.

The people of the neighbor islands deserve a state response that prioritizes action over process. Establishing another working group risks reinforcing the perception that government continues to study the problem while communities remain exposed to the same risks that have already been identified.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider SB17 in its current form.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Edward Codelia
Maui, Hawai'i
Candidate for House District 2