



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

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

**Committee on Ways and Means**

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

10:31 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

**In Support**

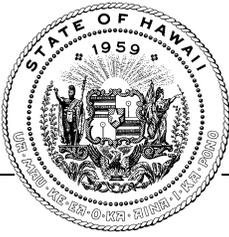
**Senate Bill No. 17, SD1, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of the Governor supports S.B. No. 17, SD1, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation. This bill establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, comprised of cross-disciplinary leaders, to be placed within the Department of Law Enforcement and administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

The Office of the Governor believes this measure will advance the goals, responsibilities, and oversight functions of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, while strengthening coordination and strategic planning around wildfire mitigation efforts statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:31 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

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

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

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SB 17, SD 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 1.

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  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

Before the Senate Committee on  
WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
10:31 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 221

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

Senate Bill 17, Senate Draft 1 establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group and requires a report to the Legislature. It also mandates the Office of the Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the group and allocates funding. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.**

While the Department agrees with the bill's goal of enhancing wildfire prevention and mitigation, it has the following recommendation. The Department respectfully recommends amending Section 2(b) to include the addition of the Insurance Commissioner, or the Insurance Commissioner's designee, to the membership of the working group. Wildfire risk directly impacts property insurance availability, affordability, underwriting standards, and long-term market stability across the State. Participation by the Insurance Commissioner would strengthen the group's ability to align mitigation policies with insurance market realities and ensure that recommendations support both public safety and economic resilience.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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

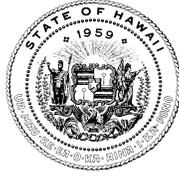
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
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JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ke 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*

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

P. O. BOX 1879  
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TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS  
ON MARCH 4, 2026 AT 10:31AM IN CR 211

**SB17, SD1, RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION**

March 4, 2026

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 and 4) appropriates funds.

DHHL appreciates the inclusion of the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission or the Chairperson's designee for 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, integrate food security and climate resilience initiatives with wildfire prevention, safety, and resilience, as well as the other objectives of this Working Group.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**  
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## Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the  
Senate Committee on  
Ways and Means

March 4, 2026  
10:31 a.m.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

**Measure:** S.B. No. 17, S.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 establish a multifaceted Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, to proactively address the increasing threat of wildfires through a comprehensive and collaborative strategy that includes developing land management incentives, charting evacuation routes, and improving structural hardening to protect Hawaii's communities and resources. Addressing the complex threat of catastrophic wildfires requires a collaborative effort among government agencies, technical experts, and community stakeholders to create a coordinated response.

The Commission appreciates the amendments made by the Senate Committees on Public Safety and Military Affairs and Water, Land, and Culture and the Art by including the Commission's Chairperson or their designee as a member of the working group to the previous bill draft. This membership is appropriate as several of the group's duties intersect directly with the Commission's ongoing regulatory oversight of utility operations and public safety under sections 269-6 and 269-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Commission is available to offer technical support and regulatory expertise in the following areas:

- Ingress and Egress
- Land and Fuels Management
- Workforce Development
- Building Shell Hardening

While the Commission stands ready to assist in these technical areas, certain tasks such as the integration of food security initiatives fall outside the Commission's traditional regulatory scope and statutory mandate. Given the Commission's limited resources, our participation would necessarily focus on programmatic alignment between the electrical grid and broader state mitigation strategies.

On December 31, 2025, the Commission approved Hawaiian Electric's 2025-2027 Wildfire Mitigation Plan, which represents a foundational effort to reduce utility-related ignition risk. We believe our formal inclusion in this working group will ensure that these utility-specific efforts are programmatically integrated into a safer, more resilient future for Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



# Kamehameha Schools®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 10:31 a.m.

Date: March 4, 2026

Where: Conference Room 211

## TESTIMONY

Kā'eo Duarte

Vice President, 'Āina Pauahi, Kamehameha Schools

**RE: SB17, SD1 Relating to Wildfire Mitigation**

Aloha e ka Luna Ho'omalua Dela Cruz, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Moriwaki, a me nā Lālā o ka Kōmike.

Kamehameha Schools appreciates this opportunity to **support** SB17, SD1. 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, SD1 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 SD1, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation  
Committee on Ways and Means  
March 4, 2026 at 10:31 am  
Conference Room 211 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports SB17 SD1, which establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group and requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the working group.

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 SD1.

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*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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**Hawaiian  
Electric**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**SB 17, SD1  
Relating to Wildfire Mitigation**

Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
10:31 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

Hawaiian Electric is providing written testimony in **support** of SB 17, SD1, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation, which establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group with the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to providing 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.

We encourage the committees to consider adding electric utilities to sit on the Working Group. The Working Group should also consider needed wildfire mitigation measures such as regulations identifying the vegetation management obligations of public and private landowners as well as a practical vegetation management program for landowners and public utilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in **support** of SB 17, SD1, and we appreciate your consideration in adopting our proposed amendments.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**IBEW 1260 - TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB17 SD1 – RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION  
WAM Hearing — Wednesday, March 4, 2026 — 10:31 am**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1260 submits testimony in **support** of SB17 SD1, which establishes a Wildfire Mitigation Working Group within the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop coordinated strategies to reduce wildfire risk across Hawaii.

IBEW 1260 appreciates the bill's recognition that wildfire mitigation requires collaboration between government, industry, and labor, including efforts to strengthen workforce development and improve infrastructure resilience.

As wildfire mitigation strategies are developed, vegetation management near electrical infrastructure will remain a critical component of reducing wildfire risk. Work performed near energized electrical facilities presents significant safety hazards and should be performed by properly trained and qualified professionals. IBEW 1260 will respectfully recommend that vegetation management work near electrical transmission and distribution lines be performed by **qualified line clearance tree trimmers**, consistent with industry safety standards.

IBEW Local 1260 respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB17 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

## Testimony on SB17 SD1 – Relating to Wildfire Mitigation

February 2, 2026

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on SB17 SD1. As this measure comes before Ways and Means, careful alignment at this stage will be critical to ensure continuity with the State's Wildfire Action Strategy and sound fiscal stewardship. The State is at a critical transition point in its wildfire efforts, and the recommendation below is intended to ensure clarity, continuity, and responsible alignment of public resources.

**Essential Context-** Following the Lahaina fires, Governor Green requested development of ten state-level wildfire priorities based on the findings of the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), completed in early 2025. Those priorities include development of a coordinated State Wildfire Action Strategy. The Department of the Attorney General contracted with Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) to develop that Strategy, which will be completed in February 2027.

The Strategy is well underway. It is grounded in FSRI analysis, informed by technical expertise, and developed through coordinated alignment among State departments and agencies, including the Office of the State Fire Marshal, along with counties, land managers, industry leaders, researchers, and other key stakeholders, including those named in SB17 and more. Significant State resources have already been invested in technical review, priority setting, sequencing, defined responsibilities, and cross-sector coordination. The State is now transitioning from coordinated planning to implementation.

**Ensuring Clarity and Continuity-** As drafted, SB17 establishes a working group to “develop” and “chart” plans in subject areas already encompassed within the FSRI priorities and the ongoing Strategy process. At this stage, it is essential that the State operate from one clear and coordinated roadmap.

To avoid duplication or confusion over which framework guides wildfire mitigation efforts, SB17 should clearly align with and build upon the State Wildfire Action Strategy already in development. A single, coordinated approach will help maintain consistency and ensure the State moves forward in an orderly progression: from disaster (Lahaina), to investigation and analysis (FSRI), to coordinated statewide planning (HWMO-led Strategy), and now into measurable implementation (OSFM, SB17 working group, and more).

Real progress will depend on sustained multi-sector coordination to carry out the Strategy as designed. The working group can be a productive next step if it builds on the State-funded Strategy already in progress and moves that work into measurable implementation. We are

asking for that to be a set expectation, to ensure no duplication or replanning of what has already been carefully developed and planned using State funding.

**Recommended Amendment- Align the Working Group with the State Wildfire Action Strategy:**

- Require that the February 2027 State Wildfire Action Strategy serve as the guiding framework for the working group's efforts, and that its work advance the relevant priorities and action steps already identified.
- Specify that the group focus first on coordinating implementation of established priorities and avoid re-planning work already completed through the State-funded Strategy process.
- Explicitly state that the intent of this measure is to carry forward the post-Lahaina Strategy into implementation by pursuing and coordinating the identified next-steps.

Hawai'i has already invested substantial time and public resources in coordinated wildfire analysis and planning. The next step is disciplined implementation that delivers measurable wildfire readiness and safety. If structured to reinforce that implementation and preserve a single, coordinated roadmap, SB17 can help sustain the alignment needed to turn planning into real-world protection for our communities.

Mahalo for your leadership in advancing wildfire safety for Hawai'i's communities, lands, and waters, now and for generations to come.

Elizabeth Pickett and Nani Barretto  
Co-Executive Directors  
Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization

**SB-17-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:28:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Uilani Kapu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz and WAM Commissioners,

I am in support of SB 17

My name is Uilani Kapu, this bill is so important to Lahaina. Fire mitigation is very important to the families in Lahaina. Expecially for the families in Kaua'ula Valley, we have been through 4 fires due to lack of fire mitigation with West Maui Land Company who does not manage there lands due to the Law. Mitigation or maintaining your lands is only require if you have homes at a certain distance. That law needs to change, if you buy lands you need to maintain it even if you leave it undeveloped.

Mahalo nui

U'ilani Kapu

**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, Hawai'i 96813

**JARED K. REDULLA**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 17, SENATE DRAFT 1**  
**RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION**  
Before the Senate Committee on  
**WAYS AND MEANS**  
Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:31 AM  
State Capitol Conference Room 211  
**WRITTEN TESTIMONY of Dorothy Booth**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) supports Senate Bill 17, Senate Draft 1, which establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, requires a report to the Legislature, requires the OSFM to provide administrative support to the working group, and appropriates funds for this purpose.

Wildfires pose a significant and growing threat to the State of Hawaii, as tragically demonstrated by recent catastrophic fire events that have resulted in devastating losses of life, property, and natural resources. The establishment of a Wildfire Mitigation Working Group represents a critical and proactive step toward developing a coordinated, comprehensive, and science-based strategy for wildfire prevention, mitigation, and response across the State.

The OSFM believes that the creation of this working group will bring together key stakeholders, subject matter experts, government agencies, and community representatives to collaboratively assess current wildfire risks, identify gaps in existing

mitigation efforts, and develop actionable recommendations to better protect Hawaii's communities and ecosystems. A structured, multi-agency working group is essential to ensure that wildfire mitigation strategies are well-informed, adequately resourced, and effectively implemented at both the state and county levels.

The OSFM is fully committed to fulfilling its role in providing administrative support to the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group as contemplated by this bill. The OSFM has institutional knowledge, technical expertise, and operational capacity to facilitate the working group's activities, coordinate communications among its members, and assist in the preparation and submission of the required legislative report. This administrative function aligns directly with the OSFM's core mission of fire prevention, public safety, and fire risk reduction across the State of Hawaii.

The appropriation of funds provided under this bill is likewise essential. Adequate financial resources will enable the working group to conduct thorough research, engage relevant experts, hold public meetings, and develop substantive policy recommendations that reflect the complexity and urgency of the wildfire threat facing Hawaii. Without proper funding, the working group's ability to fulfill its mandate would be significantly constrained.

The OSFM strongly encourages the Legislature to pass Senate Bill 17, Senate Draft 1, and looks forward to working collaboratively with the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group and all relevant stakeholders to advance meaningful wildfire mitigation efforts that will protect the lives, homes, and natural environment of the people of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.