

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
RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION
Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND
Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9:00 AM
State Capitol Conference Room 411
WRITTEN TESTIMONY of DORTHY BOOTH

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the Committee:

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) supports Senate Bill 17, Senate Draft 2, which establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, requires reporting to the Legislature, assigns administrative support responsibilities to the OSFM, and appropriates funds for these purposes.

Wildfires present a growing threat not only to public safety, but also to Hawai'i's land resources, watersheds, ecosystems, agricultural lands, and cultural landscapes. Recent wildfire events have demonstrated the significant environmental and land management challenges associated with fire risk, including impacts on soil stability, water quality, native habitats, and long-term land-use sustainability. These realities underscore the need for a coordinated, statewide approach to wildfire mitigation that integrates public safety objectives with responsible land stewardship.

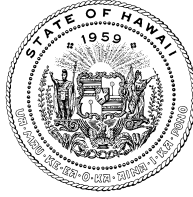
The establishment of a Wildfire Mitigation Working Group represents an important step toward strengthening Hawai'i's ability to address wildfire risks through collaborative

planning and strategic resource management. A structured, multi-agency working group will enable the State to bring together land management agencies, fire prevention authorities, environmental experts, utility partners, and community stakeholders to evaluate wildfire vulnerabilities across diverse landscapes. This coordinated approach is essential for identifying risk-reduction strategies related to vegetation management, land-use practices, infrastructure resilience, and watershed protection.

The OSFM is prepared to fulfill its role in providing administrative support to the working group as contemplated by this measure. As the State's authority on fire prevention and fire safety standards, the OSFM possesses the institutional knowledge and technical expertise necessary to coordinate interagency collaboration, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and assist in preparing the required legislative report. Supporting a multidisciplinary effort focused on wildfire mitigation aligns directly with the OSFM's mission to reduce fire risk and protect life, property, and natural resources throughout Hawai'i.

The appropriation included in this bill is necessary to ensure that the working group can conduct meaningful analysis and develop actionable recommendations. Adequate resources will support research on land-based fire risk factors, engagement with environmental and land management stakeholders, public outreach, and the development of comprehensive mitigation strategies. Without sufficient funding, the working group's ability to address the complex intersection of wildfire risk and land stewardship would be significantly constrained.

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



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committee on Water and Land

Thursday, March 19, 2026

9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Videoconference

In Support

Senate Bill No. 17, SD2, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land:

The Office of the Governor supports S.B. No. 17, SD2, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation.

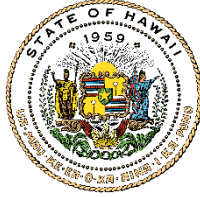
This bill establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, comprised of cross-disciplinary leaders, to be placed within the Department of Law Enforcement and administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Additionally, this measure amends the appropriations and positions funded by Act 302, Session Law of Hawai'i 2025, to reflect the request for four assistant fire marshal positions, which will better align the functions and duties of the Office of the State Fire Marshal with its statutory obligations.

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.

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 House Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Thursday, March 19, 2026
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

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

Senate Bill 17, Senate Draft 2, 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 improving wildfire prevention and mitigation, it offers the following recommendations. The Department respectfully suggests amending Section 2(b) to add the Insurance Commissioner, or the Insurance Commissioner's designee, to the membership of the working group. Wildfire risk directly affects property insurance availability, affordability, underwriting standards, and long-term market stability across the State. Including the Insurance Commissioner would enhance the group's capacity to align mitigation policies with insurance market realities and ensure that recommendations support both public safety and economic resilience.

Furthermore, the Department recommends that the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group should be explicitly aligned with the State's ongoing Wildfire Action Strategy, which is being developed under the Department of the Attorney General by the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization and is based on Fire Safety Research Institute's findings. Using the upcoming 2027 Strategy as the guiding framework, the group should focus on coordinating and implementing already established priorities rather than creating duplicative or potentially conflicting plans. Having a single, coordinated statewide roadmap will ensure sustained wildfire preparedness and protection through multi-sector collaboration.

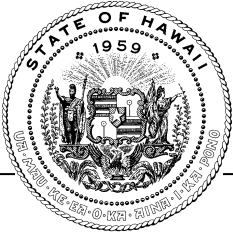
DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment 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
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

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

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

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

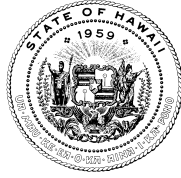
In recent years, our state has experienced tragic and devastating wildfire events that have underscored the urgent need for improved prevention, preparedness, land management, and cross-agency coordination. Wildfire risk is increasing due to drought conditions, invasive grasses, climate change, land 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.

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
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
WATER AND LAND
ON MARCH 19, 2026 AT 9:00AM IN CR 411

SB17, SD2, RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION

March 19, 2026

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the Committee:

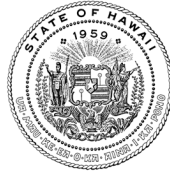
The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this bill which 1) establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, 2) requires a report to the Legislature, 3) requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the working group, 4) appropriates funds and 5)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

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

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E-mail: puc@hawaii.gov

Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the
House Committee on
Water & Land

March 19, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

Measure: S.B. No. 17, S.D. 2
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 Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, to increase the State's wildfire preparedness and mitigation practices. This measure requires the working group to identify clear deliverables regarding land/fuels management incentives, workforce development, evacuation routes, ignition-resistant building strategies, and integration of food security, climate resilience, and cultural stewardship with wildfire work. 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 measure also amends appropriations for the positions funded for the Office of the State Fire Marshal by Act 302, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025.

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. The Commission is committed to aligning utility wildfire mitigation efforts with broader state strategies that will be examined by the working group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Water & Land

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: March 19, 2026

Where: Conference Room 411

TESTIMONY

Kā'eo Duarte

Vice President, 'Āina Pauahi, Kamehameha Schools

RE: SB17, SD2 Relating to Wildfire Mitigation

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

Kamehameha Schools appreciates this opportunity to **support** SB17, SD2. 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 helps strengthen community safety, protect cultural landscapes, and promote long-term resilience statewide.

We respectfully provide a technical amendment to correct the term "kupua" to "kupuna" on page 5, line 15.

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.



**Hawaiian
Electric**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

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

Thursday, March 19, 2026
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee,

Hawaiian Electric is providing written testimony in **support** of SB 17, SD2, 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.

We respectfully request the committee to consider amending the bill with the following:

- Add electric utilities to sit on the Working Group, and
- Have the Working Group 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, SD2, and we appreciate your consideration in adopting our proposed amendments.

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting SB17 SD2, Relating to Wildfire Mitigation
Committee on Water & Land
March 19, 2026 at 9:00 am
Conference Room 411 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports SB17 SD2, which establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group 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.

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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March 19, 2026

Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Water and Land

Strong Support of HB 1712 RELATING TO WILFIRE MITIGATION (Establishes the Wildfire Mitigation Working Group. Requires a report to the Legislature. Requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to provide administrative support to the working group. Appropriates funds. Revises the appropriations made by Act 302, SLH 2025. Effective 7/1/2050. [SD2])

**Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 411, and VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE.**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i (LURF) is a private research and trade association founded in 1979, whose members include major Hawai'i landowners, developers, utility companies, and land use professionals. LURF's mission is to research, educate, and advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, laws, and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth, agriculture, housing, renewable energy, commercial and industrial uses, and tourism, while safeguarding Hawai'i's significant natural, environmental, historic, and cultural resources, public health, and safety.

LURF is in **strong support of SB 17, SD2, which** establishes, and makes an appropriation for, a Wildfire Mitigation Working Group.

LURF's Position: As we have seen in the past several years, wildfires pose a critical threat to lives, property, communities, natural resources, and the economy. This bill addresses the crucial need for a proactive, comprehensive, collaborative and coordinated approach to the ever-present dangers of wildfires by creating a working group comprised of government agencies, fire experts, relevant professionals, large landowners, and other stakeholders to find solutions that address the Hawai'i's wildfire preparedness and mitigation challenges and increase the State's wildfire preparedness and mitigation practices.

Based on the reasons stated above, LURF is in **strong support of SB 17, SD2**, and respectfully requests your favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony relating to this proposed measure.

SB-17-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:27:27 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

17 SB RELATING TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION.