

MAR 08 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON
SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK AND THE FEASIBILITY OF
ESTABLISHING A VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AS IT RELATES
TO LANDOWNERS AND PUBLIC UTILITIES.

1 WHEREAS, on August 8, 2023, catastrophic wildfires swept
2 through various communities on Maui; and

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4 WHEREAS, the wildfires impacted human life and the
5 community, housing, education, economy, and health of Maui
6 residents; and

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8 WHEREAS, the presence of grasses, trees, and other
9 vegetation adjacent to or under electric utility lines poses a
10 significant risk to fire safety; and

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12 WHEREAS, the House of Representatives, in response to the
13 August 2023 Maui wildfires, established six interim working
14 groups charged with evaluating specific topics related to the
15 wildfire and making recommendations for specific legislative
16 action; and

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18 WHEREAS, the Wildfire Prevention Working Group, one of the
19 six aforementioned working groups, found that people are the
20 primary drivers of wildfires in Hawaii, as ninety-nine percent
21 of wildfires are caused by human ignitions; and

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23 WHEREAS, the Wildfire Prevention Working Group also found
24 that guinea grass, fountain grass, molasses grass, and
25 buffelgrass can form continuous fuel beds, ignite easily, attain
26 extremely high fine fuel loads, and are capable of growing back
27 more vigorously in the post-fire environment than the majority
28 of native vegetation; and

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30 WHEREAS, utility companies in the State have miles of
31 utility lines installed throughout the State on government and
32 private land including within the public rights of way and
33 mountainous areas of the State; and



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WHEREAS, a significant portion of the aforementioned public and private lands are covered in unmanaged grasses, trees, and other vegetation that may pose a wildfire risk; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested to convene a working group to make recommendations on solutions to reduce wildfire risk and the feasibility of establishing a vegetation management program as it relates to landowners and public utilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to study the need for policy, regulation, and guidance pertaining to the management of and responsibility for vegetation on public and private lands for wildfire mitigation purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to study, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding regulations that define property owner obligations to perform vegetation management on public and private property for wildfire mitigation purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to consist of the following members:

- (1) Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources or the Chairperson's designee who is requested to serve as the chairperson of the working group;
- (2) A representative from the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (3) A representative of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- (4) Director of Transportation, or the Director's designee;

- 1 (5) Chair of the Public Utilities Commission, or the
2 Chair's designee;
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- 4 (6) A representative of the Division of Consumer Advocacy
5 of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs,
6 whose purview includes the Public Utilities;
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- 8 (7) Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, or the
9 Mayor's designee;
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- 11 (8) Mayor of the County of Maui, or the Mayor's designee;
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- 13 (9) Mayor of the County of Hawaii, or the Mayor's
14 designee;
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- 16 (10) Mayor of the County of Kauai, or the Mayor's designee;
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- 18 (11) A representative of the Hawaii Invasive Species
19 Council;
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- 21 (12) One member representing cooperative electric
22 utilities, to be invited by the chairperson of the
23 working group;
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- 25 (13) One member representing privately-owned electric
26 utilities, to be invited by the chairperson of the
27 working group; and
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- 29 (14) A landowner that owns over one thousand acres of land,
30 to be invited by the chairperson of the working group;
31 and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
34 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
35 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
36 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
37 of 2025; and

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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
40 to dissolve on June 30, 2025; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the Senate;
3 Speaker of the House of Representatives; Chairperson of the
4 Board of Land and Natural Resources; Director of Transportation;
5 Chair of the Public Utilities Commission; Executive Director of
6 the Division of Consumer Advocacy of the Department of Commerce
7 and Consumer Affairs; Mayors of the City and County of Honolulu,
8 County of Maui, County of Hawaii, and County of Kauai; Co-Chairs
9 of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council; President of the Land
10 Use Research Foundation; President and Chief Executive Officer
11 of Hawaiian Electric; President and Chief Executive Officer of
12 Kauai Island Utility Cooperative; President of Maui Electric
13 Company, Limited; and President of Hawaii Electric Light
14 Company, Inc.

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OFFERED BY: 

