



Written Testimony before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Friday, April 9, 2021 (3:00 pm)

RE: HCR68/HR56 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CREATE A LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH GOALS TO INCREASE TREE CANOPIES ON PUBLIC SCHOOL GROUNDS, DOCUMENT EXISTING INVENTORY AND TALENT, AND IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN THE PLAN.

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, Members of the Committee on Education:

Trees for Honolulu's Future (TFHF) is a nonprofit organization with a vision for a tree-filled island that preserves and enhances our quality of life, especially in the face of climate change.

We strongly support the above-referenced resolutions, which request the state Department of Education (DOE) to create a landscape management plan and more. We do suggest two minor amendments, namely:

- Specifying that the 2 degree in temperature rise in the first Whereas clause as either Celsius scale or, as we suspect it is, Fahrenheit.
- Noting in the Resolutions that properly placed tree canopy will provide all the benefits already cited plus cool buildings and thus lower electricity cost where classrooms are air-conditioned leaving more operating funds to go for other support of the schools and students.

Increasing the tree canopy, especially in schools, is so beneficial for the environment as well as for the students. Sadly though, Honolulu has been losing urban tree canopy over the past years and increasing the tree canopy at our public schools can help reverse this concerning trend.

TFHF stands ready to work with the DOE on implementation. In fact, in 2020, we had proposed a Grant-in-Aid to do much of what is described in these resolutions as TFHF could bring outside expert resources to the DOE to update its 1981 Landscape Practices and Procedures manual and its 1996 Tree Selection manual. We have the utmost respect for the DOE arborist, but she has a lot on her plate. Bringing external resources to help the department would likely be more efficient and faster than the DOE tackling this necessary task internally.

At the end of the day, it's all about the Right Tree, in the Right Place, getting the Right Care. By passing these resolutions, with the above amendments, to the Committee on Finance, you are taking a critical step to ensure this simple 3-step mantra occurs, and we create a better future for our keiki, schools, and island home.

Thank you.

Daniel Dinell, President

HONOLULU is HOT TREES are COOL

Visit us: www.TreesForHonolulu.org Contact us: info@TreesForHonolulu.org Voice/Fax/Text: 808-707-6353
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HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 4:34:31 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

When I moved here from Hong Kong 20 years ago I was shocked at the lack of awareness of skin cancer in the isles. The most shocking thing was no shade in the playgrounds at schools and the outings to the beach didn't insist the chaperones check that sunscreen was reapplied. It's shameful and backwards. We need more shade where children play because skin cancer is another horrible way to die.

HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 11:14:48 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Teresa Parsons	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

What a wonderful idea! Great opportunities to teach AND teach respect for the 'aina. I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of this measure with many benefits. I urge every committee member to support this commonsense resolution. Mahalo for accepting my written testimony.

HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/7/2021 11:47:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
IRVIN HIGASHI, ASLA	Testifying for OKAHARA AND ASSOCIATES, INC.	Support	No

Comments:

We as landscape architects strongly supports HCR No. 68 in terms of tree planting on DOE campuses throughout the State of Hawaii. A landscape management plan is also critical and needed in making sure that appropriate tree species is selected and where it is planted to serve its purpose. Tree maintenance and guideline manuals will assist the schools in keeping trees healthy and well cared for. A computer base tree inventory program will provide huge benefits for the DOE to manage and monitor on a yearly basis.

Thank you,

Irvin Higashi, ASLA

Senior Associate/Landscape Architect/Certified Arborist/Tree Risk Assessment Qualification Okahara and Associates, Inc. | Engineers and Landscape Architects

HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/7/2021 1:20:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kamuela Werner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha:

I strongly support HCR68.

Me ke aloha,

Kamuela Werner

HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 11:01:18 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Nandoskar	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT! Increasing the tree canopy on school grounds is a WIN for children, Hawaii and the planet. Trees sequester carbon and provide shade reducing the need for air conditioning. Studies have shown and continue to provide scientific evidence that trees contribute to overall public health outcomes. We want the best for our keiki and moopuna and the simple act of planting, caring for and engaging in outdoor environments that include a tree canopy is a feasible action we can take now and into the future. Please support this bill!!

Study supporting trees as benefit to human health published on June 18, 2020:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7345658/>

Abstract

The urban forest is a green infrastructure system that delivers multiple environmental, economic, social and health services, and functions in cities. Environmental benefits of urban trees are well understood, but no review to date has examined how urban trees affect human health. This review provides a comprehensive summary of existing literature on the health impacts of urban trees that can inform future research, policy, and nature-based public health interventions. A systematic search used keywords representing human health, environmental health, and urban forestry. Following screening and appraisal of several thousand articles, 201 studies were conceptually sorted into a three-part framework. Reducing Harm, representing 41% of studies, includes topics such as air pollution, ultraviolet radiation, heat exposure, and pollen. Restoring Capacities, at 31%, includes attention restoration, mental health, stress reduction, and clinical outcomes. Building Capacities, at 28%, includes topics such as birth outcomes, active living, and weight status. The studies that were reviewed show substantial heterogeneity in purpose and method yet indicate important health outcomes associated with people's exposure to trees. This review will help inform future research and practice, and demonstrates why urban forest planning and management should strategically promote trees as a social determinant of public health.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/7/2021 10:03:55 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Max Moonier	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Not only is planting more trees very important for our future in general, but having them at school will give much needed shade to students as it gets warmer.

HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 9:38:03 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

The Climate Protectors Hawaii **Supports** this Concurrent Resolution. Trees on campuses can help shade schools and sequester carbon dioxide.

The curriculum should educate students about the climate benefits of trees.

HCR-68

Submitted on: 4/8/2021 1:45:51 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/9/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cara Oba	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hello,

I'd just like to share that this is a wonderful bill. I grew up in Hawaii and many of my favorite childhood playground and afterschool memories happen to be all tree-centered or in the shade of a tree. I didn't even recognize this until reading this bill. I am flooded with positive memories. I am also reminded that the early learning program that I selected for my own child was an outdoor learning program that again featured large trees that provided shade but also served as a center for play, games, and opportunities for learning. My child's favorite word is "dappled" and I wouldn't be surprised if her days spent looking at the filtered sunlight through the tree canopies during her days of play makes her think fondly of this word. I can personally attest to trees going hand-in-hand with a rich and comforting educational landscape.

The power of this kind of choice moves me deeply. It's hard to share in words how much richer a school "campus" can become. Hawaii can be hot. Classrooms can be stifling. The trees offer a sense of protection and respite. A place to hang out and socialize with friends. A place to relax together but separately -- each in one's own activity sharing the shade. In elementary school I recall gathering with friends after school to talk while we played with grasses, bark, petals, leaves and seeds while we hung out. We would play games incorporating the trees when we were younger. It's an informal space that feels private but yet connected to the world around you. It's just incredibly precious and having more trees offers more of these spaces for more children....and adults! This also makes me think about my mother, who as a teacher, would have "yard duty" and would return sunburned on many days and started carrying around an umbrella in addition to wearing a heavy layer of sunscreen. I think she probably would have been very happy to have more trees to shelter under during those recess periods. ;) I also recall that when she'd gather students for extracurricular activities, her classroom would sometimes get so hot even with many fans blowing. It was better to close the windows to keep the sun out instead.

Adding trees to school landscaping would be something that could make schools into a more welcoming and comfortable place overall. A place where students and teachers have options beyond the classroom walls. Schools often serve as activity centers for communities. Considering the present pandemic, this is a wonderful opportunity to think more about our outdoor space opportunities. Planting trees is the kind of idea that

broadens opportunities and benefits for both schools and communities in the longer term.

I support this bill and hope you do too!

Sincerely,

Cara