



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Monday, February 8, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

By
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SB 999 – RELATING TO FORESTRY

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 999 as it relates to the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). CTAHR's Natural Resources and Environmental Management Department and the Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences Department are engaged in education, research and extension that addresses all the benefits of trees in building healthy soils; and the role of forests in maintaining and enhancing environmental quality.

We acknowledge the need for repair and upgrading of tree nurseries in the state; and the need for research and continued education about the role that individual trees and forests play in climate change and environmental quality.

This bill requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DNLR) to:

1. Work in collaboration with the greenhouse gas sequestration task force. CTAHR is represented on this task force and we support this approach.
2. Work in collaboration with researchers from CTAHR. CTAHR has ongoing research in the areas outlined in this bill. In fact, CTAHR acquires funding from DLNR to engage in research in a variety of relevant areas. We support the continued and fruitful collaboration that exists and look to enhancement that collaboration. We understand the value of agroforestry systems and support the approach expressed in this bill.
3. There is a clear need for continued education. CTAHR is the home of the Cooperative Extension Service and looks forward to any and all collaborations with DLNR to extend education in Extension settings.

We support this bill in its intent and in those aspects that pertain to CTAHR. However, we are aware of the current financial climate of the State of Hawai'i and realizes that state funding is reduced. For the next fiscal biennium, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents approved a budget request for the University that was flat, and did not seek any increased funding to the University. UH defers to DLNR on their priorities.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
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LAND
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson



Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Monday, February 8, 2021
1:00 PM

State Capital, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 999
RELATING TO FORESTRY

Senate Bill 999 proposes to authorize general obligation bonds for the Forest Stewardship Program of the Department of Land and Natural Resources to increase plant stock, invest in public outreach, and renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Biennium Budget request.**

The Department recognizes its important role in helping Hawai'i meet its integrated sustainability and carbon neutrality goals. One of the major hurdles to supporting these goals, as well as the various tree planting initiatives, is having a scalable source of clean and reliable planting stock. The Department currently operates a state tree nursery and multiple district nurseries servicing both public and private forestry, agroforestry, and restoration projects. These nurseries focus on plants that are difficult to find in private nurseries or that need to be grown in large quantity, such as for restoration projects.

The most pressing issue we currently have at our nurseries is that they are mostly open air, with limited-to-zero enclosed greenhouse space. With windy conditions at these nursery sites and weedy species surrounding, we have difficulty with maintaining sanitation (i.e.: keeping the planting pots clear of weed seeds, pests and diseases). The Department has the space available to increase production but needs several upgrades to make sure that we are producing reliable and clean seedlings from our nurseries.

The identified improvements will help with building the capacity needed to scale up tree planting and carbon sequestration projects, as well as increase efficiency within nursery operations. The Department notes that general obligation bonds can support the planning, design and construction needs of the infrastructure improvement, but is not eligible to support items in: (1) expansion of planting stock to include a wider diversity of species or (2) to provide for the public outreach and education identified in the measure. The infrastructure improvements will, however, allow the Department to improve quality and output, and to scale up further as resources become available, so that we can continue to contribute towards the State's sustainability, agriculture, watershed, and carbon neutrality goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-999

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 6:49:47 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Climate Protectors of Hawaii	Testifying for Climate Protectors Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

February 6, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Water and Land

Honorable Senator Lorraine Inouye, Chair

Honorable Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Re: SB999 – RELATING TO FORESTRY

Hearing: Tuesday, February 9, 2021, 1 p.m. via videoconference

From: Climate Protectors of Hawaii

Position: SUPPORT

The Climate Protectors Coalition is a group inspired by the Mauna Kea Protectors but focused on reversing the climate crisis. As a tropical island State, Hawaii will be among the first places harmed by the global climate crisis, with more intense storms, loss of protective coral reefs, food insecurity, and rising sea levels destroying our shorelines. We must do all we can to reduce our carbon footprint and become at least carbon neutral as soon as possible.

One measure to help achieve carbon neutrality is to grow more trees, which draw down carbon from the atmosphere and sequester it. This bill would help reduce atmospheric carbon by authorizing financing for the forest stewardship program, to increase plant stocks, invest in public outreach, and renovate the equipment and facilities of the of the state tree nurseries. These investment will save the state money in the long run and protect the environment.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Climate Protectors of Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Monday, February 8, 2021, 1:00 pm

Senate Committee on Water and Land

SENATE BILL 999 – RELATING TO FORESTRY: General Obligation Bonds for Forest Stewardship

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Lorraine Inouye, Vice-Chair Gil Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environmental Protection:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party, through its Committee on Energy and Climate Action, are in strong support of SB999, which acknowledges the crucial role of healthy soil in reaching State carbon-neutral goals, and the significant role played by forestry and agroforestry in optimizing the regenerative capacities of good forest stewardship.

The purpose of the bill is to fortify the State's plant nursery capacity, renovating , modernizing, and expanding existing nurseries, in collaboration with the large community of scientists and practitioners in State and federal agencies.

While General Obligation Bonds are not the preferred means of financing, draining significant dollars out of the State, Hawaii does not yet have its own public bank, which could create this wealth from its own resources.

Nonetheless, the time is upon us to take action to improve capacity in this and other fields to withstand the hardships to come as the result of climate destabilization. The impressive collaboration and expertise of the forest stewardship community will get a boost from this initiative. The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party is in strong support of SB999, thanking the authors, and thanking this committee for the opportunity to address the issue.

/s/ Charley Ice, Co-Chair, Energy and Climate Action Committee, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii