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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 House Committee on
FINANCE

Thursday, February 25, 2021
11:00 AM

State Capital, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 863, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO FORESTRY

House Bill 863, House Draft 1 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 is committed to helping Hawai'i meet its integrated sustainability and carbon neutrality goals through landscape-scale tree planting. To meet these goals, we need 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, are rare or endangered, and/or that need to be grown in large quantity, such as for restoration projects.

The Department's existing plant nurseries are aging and need major efficiency and structural upgrades, including several completely new structures. Most are open-air, with limited enclosed greenhouse space, making it difficult to maintain sanitation (i.e. keeping the planting pots clear of weed seeds, pests and diseases). Some of our nurseries, such as the one in Kahalui, are temporary structures, periodically damaged by strong winds. Recent vandalism at the Oahu rare plant nursery demonstrates the need for security improvements.

The new plant nursery infrastructure will increase capacity for landscape-scale tree planting and carbon sequestration projects and increase program efficiency within nursery operations. The nursery improvements will 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. The Department notes that general obligation bonds can support the planning, design and construction needs of the planned new infrastructure and related improvements to support the new nursery structures.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HB-863-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2021 8:35:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2021 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair,

The Honorable Ty Cullen, Vice Chair, and Members of the

House Committee on Finance

From: Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **HB863 HD1– RELATING TO FORESTRY**

Thursday February 25, 2021, 11:00 a.m., by videoconference

Position: **STRONG SUPPORT of HB863 HD1!**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Finance Committee members:

The Climate Protectors Coalition is a group 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 carbon negative as soon as possible. The planet faces an existential climate crisis and we must act now! The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) says we have less than 10 years for worldwide climate action to avoid climate catastrophe. If we are to solve the climate crisis, it will require **all of us** working together. Hawaii can and should be a leader in showing the world the way forward towards a safe and sustainable climate and future. The sooner we inspire others to take action and lead by example, the better off the future will be for our children.

HB863 HD1 would authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds to create a forest stewardship program to increase the existing plant stocks, invest in public outreach, and renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries.

Trees have the ability to heal what ails our planet. They help sequester greenhouse gases, they improve our air quality, they help rebuild soil to grow healthier plants and

they preserve water. In the past Hawaii protected trees, but our forests and facilities have fallen into disrepair. Bringing together stakeholders from the greenhouse gas sequestration task force, researchers from the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) and the US Dept of Agriculture National Resource Conservation Service can maximize the effects trees can have on Hawaii's climate and environment.

The Climate Protectors strongly support this bill because improving State nurseries will help grow trees that sequester greenhouse gases.

Please pass this bill! Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Thursday, February 25, 2021, 11:00 am

House Committee on Finance

HOUSE BILL 863 – RELATING TO RELATING TO FORESTRY: General Obligation Bonds for Forest Stewardship

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice-Chair Ty Cullen, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The two paramount features of State policy regarding climate change are the elimination of greenhouse gas emissions and the sequestration of greenhouse gases through regenerative forestry, agriculture, and pasturage. Both of these require lengthy periods of implementation to see results, but just as climate change creeps up gradually until it is suddenly overwhelming, so the results of our adaptation and mitigation policies must proceed surely and with all deliberate speed.

HB863 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 HB863, thanking this committee for the opportunity to address the issue.

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



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 863 HD1 – RELATING TO FORESTRY

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 863 HD1 as it relates to the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). This testimony is similar to that submitted to the Senate companion bill SB 999.

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.



To: The House Committee on Finance
From: Sherry Pollack, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, February 25, 2021, 11am

In support of HB863 HD1

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Finance committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii's 6,000 members **support HB863 HD1** which would authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds to renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries. Improving State nurseries will help grow trees that sequester greenhouse gases, an important strategy in our efforts to mitigate climate destabilization.

However, there is a need to update and expand the resources available to the state tree nurseries, including by increasing the available selections of trees and plants that provide beneficial functions in agricultural production. Therefore, we respectfully request that the original language in this measure regarding *"increase the existing plant stocks, invest in public outreach and education, along with collaboration with appropriate stakeholders to expand and increase the existing plant stocks of the state tree nurseries to include a wider range of native trees and plant species to be beneficial in agricultural settings for improving agricultural productivity and improving soil health"* be restored to this measure.

We must do all we can to reduce our carbon footprint and become carbon negative as soon as possible. The planet faces an existential climate crisis. The UN IPCC report says we have less than 10 years for worldwide climate action to avoid climate catastrophe. We no longer have the luxury of taking baby-steps. If we are to solve the climate crisis, it will require all of us working together to save our precious planet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support with the suggestion to restore the original HB863 language** to the very important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HB-863-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2021 8:16:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2021 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and the Committee Finance,

Please support HB 863 HD1.

I have worked in the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW). There is not enough money and resources for the division to adequately address all of the responsibilities that it is charged with.

DOFAW needs a viable and uninterrupted source of funding to renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries. The State **Tree** Nursery exists to provide high quality native, endangered and windbreak **trees** and plants for both the public and DLNR-state sponsored out-plantings and reforestation projects. We need to maintain and expand the total number of trees throughout the state to protect our forests, biodiversity, watersheds and conservation lands.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this issue.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake