

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND**

**Thursday, February 11, 2021
8:30 AM**

State Capital, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 430

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 863
RELATING TO FORESTRY**

House Bill 863 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 plays a critical 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 around the state, 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 agriculture, 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 little or no enclosed greenhouse space. With exposed 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.

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
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

The identified improvements in the bill 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 (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.

The Department proposes the following amendment to address the requirements of the general obligation bonds (amendments highlighted in gray shading):

SECTION 2. The director of finance is authorized to issue general obligation bonds in the sum of \$1,380,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary is appropriated for fiscal year 2021-2022 for the purpose of the forest stewardship program to:

~~(1) Work in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders, including but not limited to the greenhouse gas sequestration task force, researchers from the college of tropical agriculture and human resources of the university of Hawaii, and the United States Department of Agriculture National Resource Conservation Service, to expand and increase the existing plant stocks of the state tree nurseries to include a wider range of native trees and plant species identified by the division of forestry and wildlife to be beneficial in agricultural settings for improving agricultural productivity and improving soil health;~~

~~—(2) Renovate and update the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries to expand their capacity to provide clean planting materials for a variety of public and private projects; and~~

~~—(3) Use for public outreach and education regarding the benefits of trees and plants in providing soil health and the appropriate uses of trees and plants in agricultural settings.~~

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HB-863

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 12:10:09 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Mulinix	Our Revolution Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Committee,

On behalf of Our Revolution Hawaii's 7,000 members and supporters statewide, we testify in support of passage of HB863 forest stewardship program to increase the existing plant stocks, invest in public outreach, and renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries.

Mahalo for your kind attention,

Dave Mulinix

Statewide Community Organizer

Our Revolution Hawaii

HB-863

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 4:48:20 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nathan Yuen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support HB863 which authorizes general obligation bonds for the forest stewardship program of the department of land and natural resources to increase plant stocks, invest in public outreach, and renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries.

I am involved in several native forest restoration projects on Oahu at Hamakua Marsh, Pia Valley, and Waimea Valley. We are in need of native seedlings to reforest our mountains and coasts. There has been dieback of ironwood trees in Kalihi Valley and strawberry guava on Hawaii Loa Ridge. We will need to plant hundreds of thousands or not millions of trees to hold back the slopes and restore the forest.

There is a big need for seedlings to plant in our forests and coastlines. I strongly support HB 863.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water and Land
Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

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

HB 863 – RELATING TO FORESTRY

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 863 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 (DLNR) 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.

HB-863

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 8:45:23 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jacob B Shearer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please assist the states many different organizations and individuals making efforts to maintain the intrity of our ecosystems. There is no need to explain the importance of trees to our islands, and especially native trees. If possible, please consider explicit support for the raising and outplanting of native species.



Written Testimony before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Thursday, February 11, 2021 (8:30 am)

RE: HB863 RELATING TO FORESTRY

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

Trees for Honolulu's Future (TFHF) is a non-profit 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 support the above-referenced bill, which authorizes general obligation bonds to DLNR to increase plant stocks, invest in public outreach, and renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries. To state the obvious, to increase the tree canopy, as TFHF work towards, adequate, and appropriate, nursery stock is critical.

Furthermore, TFHF likes how this bill's preamble stresses how trees create multiple benefits well documented by research. Trees create shade and use evapotranspiration to lower temperature. Trees also recharge groundwater and decrease surface runoff protecting our reefs. Trees trap pollutants and store CO2. Trees calm traffic. Sadly though, Honolulu has been losing urban tree canopy over the past years so increasing the availability of quality nursery stock is essential for all our partners.

Former Vice President Al Gore said it best when he wrote in the September 20, 2019, New York Times: *"And so far, the best available technology for pulling carbon dioxide from the air is something called a tree."* We are running out of time to address climate change. Trees will help and so will this bill and the associated investment into building our tree nursery capacity.

We ask that this bill be passed to the Committee on Finance. Thank you for caring for and working toward a better future.

Mahalo,

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
P.O. Box 12051, Honolulu, Hawaii 96828

HB-863

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 9:43:34 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Welina:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB 863 which authorizes general obligation bonds for the forest stewardship program of the Department of Land and Natural Resources to increase plant stocks, invest in public outreach, and renovate the equipment and facilities of the state tree nurseries.

The Waianae Coast is in desperate need of more trees to aid wildfire prevention efforts, increase food sustainability, and regrow low elevation native dryland forest. Further, swaths of Waianae are zoned for agricultural uses and would greatly benefit from the strategic planting of trees to potentially increase crop yield and improve soil health. Therefore, please PASS HB 863.

Me ke aloha,

Kamuela Werner, MPH

Mali, Waianae Resident

HB-863

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 12:28:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

We need more native trees to provide shade and carbon sequestering.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Thursday, February 11, 2021, 8:30 am

House Committee on Water and Land

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

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair David Tarnas, Vice-Chair Patrick Branco, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party, through its Committee on Energy and Climate Action, are in strong support of HB863, 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 HB863, 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

HB-863

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 12:19:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Janet Pappas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear WAL Committee Members,

I am in strong support of HB863 to 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. Equally as important, trees can also lift our spirits. Here's to more trees planted!

Please move forward with this plan. Support HB863.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jan Pappas

Aiea, Hawaii