
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

PART I

1 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to provide funding
2 for forest conservation and access to preserve Hawaii's
3 uniqueness; improve the quality of life, health, and safety for
4 Hawaii's residents and visitors; and maintain Hawaii's economy.
5 Forest conservation and access are also critical for the
6 sustenance of irreplaceable cultural and natural values.

7 Furthermore, these items directly address major threats due
8 to climate change by increasing resilience to drought
9 conditions, more frequent and more extreme natural disasters,
10 and expanded ranges of invasive species.

PART II

11 SECTION 2. The legislature finds that climate change
12 significantly threatens Hawaii's freshwater supplies. The
13 islands have already experienced decades of reduced rainfall as
14 well as changes in tradewind patterns and higher temperatures.
15



1 As these trends accelerate, Hawaii's limited supplies of fresh
2 water will be further taxed.

3 Through Act 152, Session Laws of Hawaii 2000, the
4 legislature recognized that fresh water is not an infinite
5 resource and its high quality, quantity, and sustainability
6 depend upon forested watersheds.

7 Protecting and restoring Hawaii's forests will be critical
8 for climate-change resiliency on many levels. In addition to
9 increasing supplies of fresh water, these forests also reduce
10 stress on coral reefs and fisheries by preventing erosion.
11 Moreover, these forests store carbon, significantly reducing
12 Hawaii's carbon emissions. For these reasons, the Hawaii
13 greenhouse gas emissions reduction task force strongly
14 recommends opportunities for reforestation projects to meet the
15 targets of the Hawaii clean energy initiative. The
16 intergovernmental panel on climate change also identified
17 preventing deforestation as the largest and most immediate
18 impact on carbon stock in the short term.

19 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$4,000,000 or so much
21 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 and the



1 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
2 2016-2017 for projects undertaken in accordance with watershed
3 management plans.

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

6 PART III

7 SECTION 4. The legislature finds that additional resources
8 are necessary for emergency response and preparedness for
9 natural disasters. Events such as flooding, hurricanes, and
10 wildfires are expected to increase in frequency and severity as
11 climate change accelerates.

12 As invasive species spread, our islands also become
13 increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters. Hurricane Iselle
14 demonstrated the destructive qualities of invasive species such
15 as albizia trees, which toppled during high winds. Wildfires
16 have been intensified by fire-prone invasive species, such as
17 fountain grass and other plants that increase fuel loads.
18 Erosion caused by flooding has also greatly increased as native
19 forests are replaced by shallow-rooted invasive plants or become
20 barren areas.



1 The department of land and natural resources, division of
2 forestry and wildlife, is responsible for wildfire preparedness
3 and response as well as assisting federal, state, and county
4 agencies during emergencies and natural disasters. Hawaii's
5 responders need access to new technologies developed to increase
6 efficiency and the effectiveness of detection and response to
7 these types of natural disasters that affect natural
8 environments as well as public safety.

9 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 and the
12 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
13 2016-2017 for equipment for fire, natural disaster, and
14 emergency response.

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

17 PART IV

18 SECTION 6. The legislature finds that Hawaii's residents
19 and visitors need to enjoy and connect with the natural
20 environment. Visiting natural areas cultivates respect and
21 appreciation for Hawaii's natural and cultural heritage. First-



1 hand experiences in nature teach youth and adults the importance
2 of these natural resources so they can be appreciated and
3 protected now and in the future.

4 Hiking, gathering, hunting, and other forms of outdoor
5 recreation are beneficial for mental and physical health. In
6 addition to providing a source of exercise, spending time in
7 natural environments significantly reduces stress and
8 depression, improves the ability to focus attention, strengthens
9 the immune system, and increases longevity.

10 Outdoor recreation is also central to Hawaii's visitor
11 industry. Hawaii's iconic trails and natural areas are a major
12 attraction. A study in 1997 by Roumasset, et al., found that
13 the Koolau mountains provide a present net value of
14 \$1,000,000,000 to \$3,000,000,000 for ecotourism alone.

15 Trails, public access, and other infrastructure allow the
16 people of Hawaii to experience the islands' natural environment.
17 Statewide, improvements are needed to address the deteriorating
18 conditions of these trails, particularly high-use trails
19 frequented by visitors. Furthermore, development, particularly
20 in rural areas, can restrict access points for the public to
21 hike, gather, and hunt in public lands. Funding is needed to



1 improve the infrastructure and access necessary to connect
2 people to the natural environment, which provides so many
3 benefits to the health of Hawaii's people and economy.

4 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,000,000 or so much
6 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 and the
7 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
8 2016-2017 for forest and outdoor recreation improvement.

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

11 PART V

12 SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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H.B. NO. 440

Report Title:

Forest Conservation and Access

Description:

Appropriates funds for land and natural resources.

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