
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

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

1 PART I

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

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

12 PART II

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



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 quality, quantity, and sustainability depend
6 upon forested watersheds.

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

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



1 2016-2017 for projects undertaken in accordance with watershed
2 management plans.

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

5 PART III

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

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

20 The department of land and natural resources, division of
21 forestry and wildlife, is responsible for wildfire preparedness

1 and response as well as assisting federal, state, and county
 2 agencies during emergencies and natural disasters. Hawaii's
 3 responders need access to new technologies developed to increase
 4 efficiency and the effectiveness of detection and response to
 5 these types of natural disasters that affect natural
 6 environments as well as public safety.

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

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

PART IV

16 SECTION 6. The legislature finds that Hawaii's residents
 17 and visitors need to enjoy and connect with the natural
 18 environment. Visiting natural areas cultivates respect and
 19 appreciation for Hawaii's natural and cultural heritage. First-
 20 hand experiences in nature teach youth and adults the importance



1 of these natural resources so they can be appreciated and
2 protected now and in the future.

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

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

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



1 people to the natural environment, which provides so many
2 benefits to the health of Hawaii's people and economy.

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

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

10 PART V

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



Report Title:

Forest Conservation and Access; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the department of land and natural resources for land and natural resource projects related to watershed management plans; equipment for fire, natural disaster, and emergency response; and forest and outdoor recreation improvement. (HB440 HD1)

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