



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

By  
Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
And  
Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### SB 3375 – RELATING TO WILDFIRE PREVENTION

Chairs Kim, Wakai and Inouye, Vice Chairs Kidani and Elefante, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 3375 relating to wildfire prevention. The bill appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to establish a Central O'ahu Wildfire Prevention Plan, in consultation with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), community stakeholders, and nonprofit organizations that specialize in wildfire preparedness and mitigation programming. The bill requires matching funds from USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense grants.

CTAHR concurs that the bill correctly identifies the scale and severity of Hawaii's wildfire issues and the unique challenges the state must cope with to reduce risk. The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is identified as a key element in beginning the process of wildfire risk mitigation as the Central O'ahu region of the state is one of the few remaining areas lacking a CWPP. CWPPs not only gather community input and identify appropriate risk reduction measures, they also facilitate raising funds from fire-related federal sources.

CTAHR Cooperative Extension faculty and staff have had long-standing involvement and partnerships with wildfire response and mitigation in Hawai'i by providing the best available information on the science of land management and by supporting land use planning. As appropriate, we will request assistance and feedback from DLNR and other relevant departments, and we will consult with community stakeholders and nonprofit organizations, and seek their cooperation in gathering information and data.

The bill would therefore facilitate CTAHR's continued involvement in and support for wildfire risk reduction efforts on Oahu both through direct funding and providing capacity to leverage additional federal funds. We are convinced that with adequate resources, the establishment of a central Oahu wildfire protection plan will help us better support wildfire prevention and fire management in local communities.

CTAHR supports the intent of SB 3375 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the measure.