

RES24-247
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 480

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (PIT)

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (PIT)
Meeting

Meeting Date: Oct 24, 2024 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 2

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Andrea (Nani) Barretto	Email: nani@hawaiiwildfire.org	Zip: 94566
Representing: Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 22, 2024 @ 10:58 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) to express our strong support for Resolution RES24-247, which urges Leeward Coast neighborhood communities to participate in the National Fire Protection Association’s Firewise USA Program and to work towards achieving Firewise USA recognition alongside partnering organizations, including HWMO and State Division of Forestry & Wildlife.

As we are all aware, Hawaii faces unprecedented wildfire threats due to our changing climate, increasing population (99% of ignitions in HI are human-caused), and the large swaths of unmanaged lands that are growing in and around unprepared residential areas. The Leeward Coast, with its mix of urban and wildland areas, is particularly vulnerable to wildfires. The Firewise USA Program for Hawaii communities is coordinated by HWMO and the State Division of Forestry & Wildlife, and is an excellent opportunity for our communities to proactively address these risks.

Benefits of HWMO's Firewise Communities Program:

1. Community Empowerment: The Firewise program encourages neighborhoods to take ownership of their fire safety and preparedness. By participating, residents can learn about effective mitigation strategies tailored to their unique environments, fostering a culture of preparedness.
2. Increased Awareness: The program promotes education about wildfire risks and prevention measures. This heightened awareness can lead to better decision-making regarding landscaping, home construction, and emergency preparedness.
3. Recognition and Support: Achieving Firewise USA recognition not only enhances community pride but also positions neighborhoods to receive potential funding and resources from local, state, and federal agencies aimed at wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
4. Strengthened Resilience: Participation in the Firewise Program fosters collaboration among neighbors, creating networks of support that enhance community resilience in the face of wildfires. Together, communities can develop and implement action plans that make them safer.
5. Long-term Sustainability: By implementing Firewise principles, communities can contribute to the overall health of our environment, helping to maintain the balance of our unique ecosystems while protecting lives and property.

Call to Action

We urge the Honolulu City Council to support this resolution and champion HWMO's Firewise Communities Program (which is part of the national Firewise USA Program) in the Leeward Coast communities. By doing so, you will be taking a critical step toward safeguarding our neighborhoods and ensuring that residents are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to prevent and be prepared for wildfires.

In conclusion, the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization stands ready to support the Council and the community in this vital endeavor. Together, we can create a safer, more resilient future for the Leeward Coast.

Mahalo for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Andrea (Nani) Barretto
Co-Executive Director
Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization
nani@hawaiiwildfire.org

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Angela Melody Young	Alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Support	Oct 24, 2024 @ 11:06 AM
Testimony:		
CARES testifies in strong support.		