

REPORT TO THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAI'I
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMUNITY FUELS REDUCTION PROGRAM



Prepared by:

**THE STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE**

In Response to Act 303, SLH 2025, Section 4 (b)

Honolulu, Hawai'i

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PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

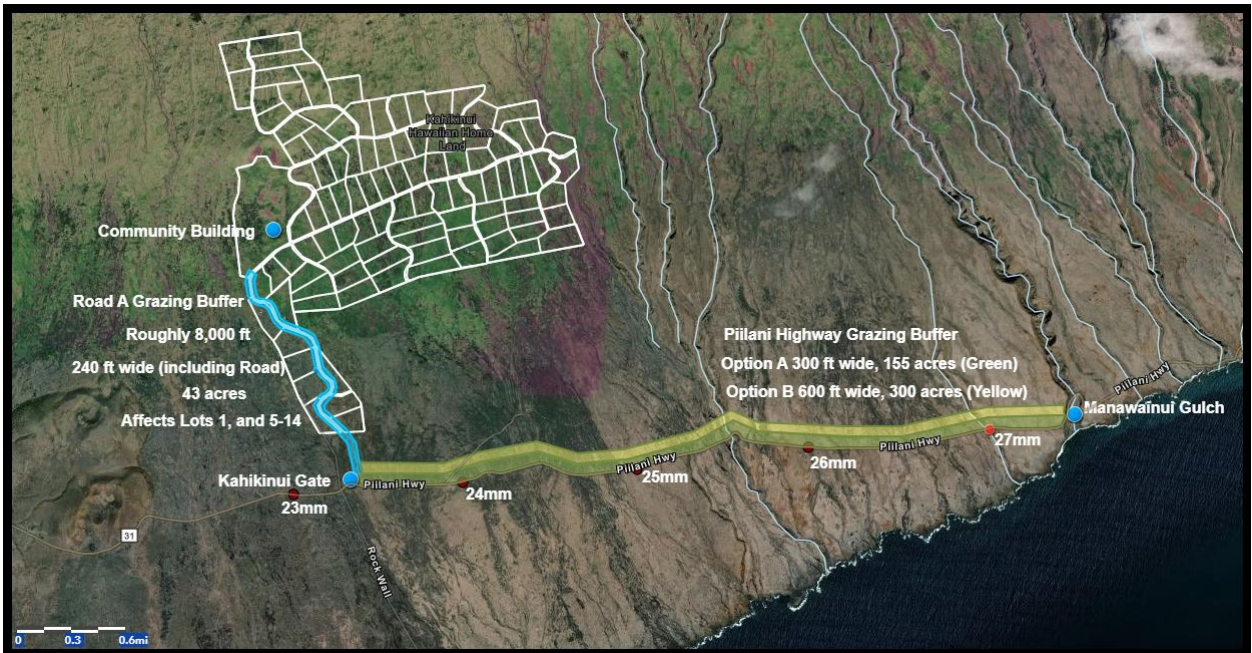
Act 303, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH), strengthened the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry and Wildlife's (DOFAW) wildfire prevention authorities by amending Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 185 to enable DOFAW to reduce hazardous vegetation on lands outside of its current authority. The measure:

- Reaffirmed DLNR's program for wildland fire prevention, control, and extinguishment in forest reserve areas.
- Required DLNR to develop and execute the Community Fuels Reduction Project.
- Allocated \$1,000,000 to reduce hazardous fuels on state lands near communities where feasible.

This report meets the Act's requirement to update the Legislature on implementation progress.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Meetings with the DOFAW Protection Section in early July 2025 identified lands owned by the Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL) and the Department of Education (DOE) that are at high risk of fire and are adjacent to or near DOFAW's management zones as priorities for fuel reduction projects using funds from Act 303. Managers were assigned to propose project areas within DHHL and DOE lands.
- Contact with DHHL was established and a meeting date was set for July 30, 2025.
- Discussions with DHHL concluded that a project within the Kahikinui DHHL community aligns with the project's scope, considering its proximity to DOFAW lands, high risk to the community, and recent fire activity (June 2025).
- Maui DOFAW branch and DHHL staff proposed grazing fuel breaks along the Piilani Highway and community access road, as well as adding a water tank for the helicopter dip tank, all within the \$1M allocation from Act 303.
- Discussions occurred between DOFAW Maui and the Kahikinui community, with the community emphasizing the 300 ft grazed fuel break along Piilani and the helicopter dip tank (see option A in the figure on next page).



- A memo to the Department of Budget & Finance (B&F) requesting the release of funds was drafted and sent in August 2025.
- DHHL began the compliance work with SHPD in September 2025.
- B&F asked the Department to submit a memo requesting the Governor's approval to procure funds exceeding \$200,000. The memo was drafted and sent in October 2025.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 – BUDGET

- Fence construction costs are estimated at \$700,000.
- Installation of a 30,000-gallon water tank is estimated at \$60,000.
- Remaining funds will be dedicated to a smaller project yet to be decided.

2026 LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Act 303 launched a program to reduce wildfire hazards faced by state agencies and communities. While the initial \$1 million provided a strong start for a demonstration project, additional funding and staffing are needed to meet statewide needs. In FY25, DOFAW allocated \$1.5 million from its operating budget to establish, through the Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization, a state-funded competitive grant program supporting community and municipal wildfire mitigation efforts. Nine projects received funding, though 22 applications requested a total of \$4.7 million. As the program enters its second year, demand is expected to grow as more communities become aware of it. Increasing DOFAW's funding for community risk reduction—and potentially creating a special fund to support complex, multi-year projects—would help sustain and expand these efforts.