



SHELEE M. KIMURA
President and Chief Executive Officer

October 27, 2023

Honorable H. Morgan Griffith
Chair, Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations
House of Representatives
Congress of the United States
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Aloha Chair Griffith,

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before your subcommittee on September 28, 2023.

As the subcommittee is aware, on October 12, 2023, I submitted a letter with follow-up responses to certain questions posed by the members of the subcommittee during the hearing. On October 13, 2023, we received your letter with additional questions for the record, and the following are our answers to those questions.

The Honorable Morgan Griffith

1. **During the hearing, you stated that “the red flag warning was initiated overnight on August 7th, and by the morning of August 7th, at 7:00 a.m., we had instituted our protocols.” You also stated that parts of the state experienced higher winds than forecast.**
 - a. **When did Hawaiian Electric or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates (referred to here collectively as “Hawaiian Electric”) become aware of the red flag warning in place prior to the fires? Please provide a specific date and time if possible.**

Response:

As described in my letter dated October 12, 2023, Hawaiian Electric was aware that the National Weather Service had issued a Red Flag Warning for the leeward areas of all of the Hawaiian Islands by approximately 3:15 a.m. on Monday, August 7, 2023.

- b. **When did Hawaiian Electric become aware that the winds on August 7th**

and 8th were stronger than forecasted?

Response:

Hawaiian Electric was monitoring weather forecasts and updates from the sources noted in the answer to subpart (c) below, but it did not learn until after the windstorm had passed that winds had been higher than forecast. Thus, Hawaiian Electric prepared and acted on the information it had before and during the weather event. In response to forecast high winds, Hawaiian Electric implemented the protocol that it had in place for Maui for red flag and/or high wind events, the Reclose Blocking Procedure, as described in response to Question 2, below. Hawaiian Electric also stood up its Incident Management Team on August 8 to address the extensive damage to its system that the windstorm caused. The strong winds caused more damage to our system than the local team expected based on the forecast.

c. Does Hawaiian Electric monitor weather conditions on a real-time basis?

Response:

Hawaiian Electric periodically throughout the day receives weather forecasts and updates from third parties such as the National Weather Service, Maui County Alerts, and a private provider, StormGeo. As described in my letter dated September 19, 2023, Hawaiian Electric also has been installing weather stations on Maui, starting before August 8, and in other parts of its service territory, and is in the process of developing procedures to incorporate the real-time data from those weather stations into its operations.

d. During the hearing, you stated that Hawaiian Electric had “teams” getting information from “third parties” on weather conditions.

i. Who composes these teams?

Response:

The “team” I referenced in my testimony was our Maui control room staff, who are some of the employees in system operations who receive weather alerts from third parties, and our Maui Electric Incident Management Team (“IMT”). The information from these third parties consists of forecasts and updates.

ii. Who are the third parties?

Response:

The third party weather information providers are the National Weather Service, Maui County Alerts and StormGeo.

iii. Is this information you referred to real-time information about

current weather conditions, or forecasts?

Response:

Hawaiian Electric receives weather forecasts and alerts from third parties such as the National Weather Service, Maui County Alerts, and a private provider, StormGeo; the periodic information from these third parties consists of forecasts, emergency alerts and updates.

2. Based on the discussion at the hearing, it is my understanding that Hawaiian Electric was monitoring the weather situation on August 7th; however, protocols were not triggered until the following morning on August 8th. You also stated in response to questioning that Hawaiian Electric was aware of the red flag warning from the National Weather Service.

- a. **As on August 7th, what protocols, safeguards, or procedures would this red flag warning trigger for Hawaiian Electric?**
- b. **What protocols, safeguards, or procedures did Hawaiian Electric engage in response to this warning? Please provide a copy of each.**
- c. **When did Hawaiian Electric engage each of these protocols, safeguards, or procedures in response to this warning? Please provide the date and time, if possible.**
- d. **Did those people monitoring the weather have the authority to engage the protocols, safeguards, or procedures for high wind conditions?**

i) If so, why did they not engage them prior to 7 a.m.?

ii) If not, who does have the authority to do so?

Response:

As I clarified in the hearing, Hawaiian Electric was aware that the National Weather Service had issued a Red Flag Warning in the early morning of Monday, August 7, 2023 and had started to put its high wind protocol into place by 7 a.m. the same morning. As described in my letter dated October 12, 2023 where I provided additional details, Hawaiian Electric was aware that the National Weather Service had issued a Red Flag Warning for the leeward areas of all of the Hawaiian Islands by approximately 3:15 a.m. on Monday, August 7, 2023.

In response to this, Hawaiian Electric implemented the protocol that it had in place for Maui for red flag and/or high wind events, the Reclose Blocking Procedure. That protocol includes triggers for both Red Flag Warnings and other high wind conditions. The approach outlined in that protocol has been in place

since at least early 2021. A copy of the protocol that was in place and implemented is attached as Attachment 1.

Under that protocol, the system operations team disables automatic reclosing on a preset list of circuit breakers and reclosers. This means that if a fault on one of the lines causes the line to trip offline (i.e., de-energize), the circuit breaker or recloser will not automatically attempt to re-energize the circuit. The protocol provides that circuits will be manually re-energized only after they have been inspected and found “clear and intact.”

The Maui control room is authorized to implement this protocol if the conditions for implementing it are met, which they were on August 7, without needing further approvals. The Maui control room began implementing this protocol around 6:00 a.m. on August 7. By 8:20 a.m., the Reclose Blocking Procedure had been implemented and remained implemented through August 31..

3. **You stated during the hearing, “From a little bit before 7:00 a.m., [Hawaiian Electric’s] lines were not reenergized.”**

- a. **Once de-energized, how long does it take for the energy to leave the powerlines? I understand that it takes some time for the energy to leave the power lines once de-energized, but how long was it before the power lines were no longer a danger to the public, firefighters or anyone who may come into contact with them?**

Response:

As described in my letter dated October 12, 2023, when a line trips or is manually de-energized, the flow of current stops nearly instantaneously. As is common among utilities, we generally warn the public to stay away from downed powerlines out of an abundance of caution. The public generally cannot tell whether a line is energized just by sight. And even when electricity is not flowing, downed equipment can be heavy or sharp and should be handled only by trained personnel.

- b. **At what time were the lines de-energized?**

Response:

Overnight from August 7 into August 8, Hawaiian Electric’s transmission lines serving West Maui tripped offline, the last line going out of service around 5:00 a.m. on August 8. Pursuant to the protocol described in response to Question 2, part d above, Hawaiian Electric inspected and then energized one of the transmission lines at approximately 6:00 a.m., restoring power to some customers in Lahaina. The transmission line that Hawaiian Electric was able to restore once again tripped offline at approximately 6:39 a.m. and was not re-energized again that day. There was no electricity to customers in all West Maui after that time.

- c. **What procedures or protocol govern the decision to de-energize the lines?**
- d. **Did an official, employee, or contractor of Hawaiian Electric act to de-energize the lines, or was this an automated function?**
- e. **What was the reason or cause for de-energizing the lines prior to 7:00 a.m., in accordance with this statement?**

Response:

The transmission lines serving West Maui tripped offline via automatic protection devices; they were not manually de-energized. The Reclose Blocking Procedure described in response to Question 2 governs the procedures used to re-energize lines subject to that protocol when they trip offline. Hawaiian Electric had studied but, like most utilities, did not have a preemptive Public Safety Power Shutoff Program in place on August 8. As described in my October 12, 2023, letter, Hawaiian Electric is working with other stakeholders to determine how a Public Safety Power Shutoff program could be safely implemented in Hawai'i.

- 4. **During the hearing, you stated that Hawaiian Electric was engaged in work to harden its grid against wildfires (prior to the wildfires on August 7th and 8th). In response to Ranking Member Castor's questioning, you agreed to provide documentation reflecting the work that had been proposed and what work had taken place prior to the fires. Please provide this documentation.**

Response:

Documentation reflecting the work that had been proposed prior to the fire includes Hawaiian Electric's Climate Adaptation Transmission and Distribution Resilience Program Application that was filed with the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission ("PUC") on June 30, 2022 (Docket No. 2022-0135) included as Attachment 2. The Hawaiian Electric Wildfire Mitigation Plan ("WMP") finalized January 2023 and filed with the Hawai'i PUC in PUC-HECO-IR-23, Docket No. 2022-0135 on October 2, 2023 is included as Attachment 3. In addition to the Company's response to PUC-HECO-IR-23, see responses to PUC-HECO-IR-12(b) and -17 also included as in Attachment 3. The WMP was considered an internal working document that was intended to align and inform fire mitigation work across islands and programs, including the Resilience Program.

Documentation reflecting what work had taken place prior to the fires was provided in Hawaiian Electric's written response to the information request from Chairs Rodgers, Duncan, and Griffith, item 2: "Please describe all actions taken by Hawaiian Electric to address fire risks to the electric grid on Maui prior to August 8, 2023 (going back through 2013)." Additionally, documentation reflecting what work from the Hawaiian Electric WMP had taken place prior to the fires is provided as Attachment 4.

- 5. **During the hearing, Representative Guthrie noted news sources reported that on Monday, August 7th, at 10:47 p.m., a security camera at the Maui Bird Conservation**

Center caught a bright flash in the woods, and one person at that location stated that the power then went out, and the surrounding forest was on fire shortly after that.

- a. **You stated that you “[did] not know what was known right at that moment” but that Hawaiian Electric “would have had a fault indicated.” When did Hawaiian Electric become aware of this incident at this location? Would an internal mechanism have alerted it, or did Hawaiian Electric only learn of this once witness and news reports emerged?**

Response:

As described in my letter dated October 12, 2023, the Maui Bird Sanctuary is in Olinda, Maui, in the Upcountry part of the island and is served by different electrical lines from those serving West Maui. It is approximately 25 miles as the crow flies from Lahaina. There is no indication that this fire is connected to the Lahaina fire.

Hawaiian Electric was made aware of the outage on the line that ran past the Maui Bird Sanctuary by reports from customers shortly after it happened. The camera at the Maui Bird Sanctuary indicates the incident may have occurred around 10:47 p.m. on August 7. At 10:52 p.m., Hawaiian Electric received the first call from an area customer indicating that the customer lacked power, and subsequently dispatched a troubleman to investigate. While the circuit breaker on this distribution circuit sends electronic signals to the Maui control room via Hawaiian Electric’s SCADA system,¹ as is the case with most of Hawaiian Electric’s circuit breakers on Maui, the protective device that tripped (here, a recloser) was not SCADA-enabled. Hawaiian Electric did not learn about this outage from the media.

- b. **You stated Hawaiian Electric “had many indications of faults,” presumably referring to the night of August 7th and the morning of August 8th, and that “we had employees going out to look at these faults.”**
 - i. **How did Hawaiian Electric become aware of such faults, and, generally, how soon after they occurred was someone at Hawaiian Electric notified?**
 - ii. **Once a Hawaiian Electric was aware of those faults, what specific actions were taken?**

Response:

Hawaiian Electric becomes aware of faults on its lines through a

¹ SCADA stands for Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition. It is an electronic system for gathering and analyzing electrical data in real time. It also allows the control room to remotely control protective devices, such as circuit breakers and reclosers.

combination of real-time electrical data conveyed to its control rooms via its SCADA system, customer calls, and reports from field personnel. When a fault trips a SCADA-enabled protective device, the control room learns about the fault in real time. On Maui, almost all of Hawaiian Electric's distribution circuit breakers are SCADA-enabled, but not all downstream protective devices, such as reclosers, are connected to the control room via SCADA.

When the control room becomes aware of a fault, it typically dispatches a troubleman to investigate. If the fault is the result of damage to the system that requires major repairs, then Hawaiian Electric will send a line crew to assess and make necessary repairs. When Hawaiian Electric became aware of faults on August 7-8, it sent a troubleman to investigate and attempted to identify the location of and reason for the fault. Because the windstorm caused extensive damage to Hawaiian Electric's system, it took several days for the Company to restore power to most of its impacted customers.

6. Currently, what actions would Hawaiian Electric take if its employees or contractors identify a tree that appears to be at risk of contacting one of Hawaiian Electric's lines, should it fall?

Response:

There are no indications that the Lahaina fires started because a tree contacted Hawaiian Electric's lines. If Hawaiian Electric's employees or contractors² identify and report a tree that appears to be at risk of falling onto Hawaiian Electric's power lines because it is dead, decayed, damaged, uprooted or otherwise structurally weak (also known as a hazard tree), Hawaiian Electric's system arborist would typically assess the tree to determine whether it presents a hazard that should be mitigated outside of the regular maintenance cycle. If a tree were determined to present such a hazard, Hawaiian Electric would take appropriate steps to mitigate the hazard through removal and/or pruning, including seeking necessary landowner permissions to remove trees outside of Hawaiian Electric's easements and rights-of-way.

7. What actions would Hawaiian Electric take if its employees or contractors identify a large branch that overhangs its power lines?

Response:

Branches overhanging Hawaiian Electric's power lines are trimmed by Hawaiian Electric's contractor to the specifications outlined in the Tri-Company Vegetation Management Procedures. For Maui County, Hawaiian Electric's current practice is to

² Most of Hawaiian Electric's vegetation management inspections are performed by contractors. Hawaiian Electric's procedures for contractors, including as to hazard trees, are set out in its Tri-Company Vegetation Management Policy. Section 3.9.7 concerns hazard trees and provides the same notification procedure as described in the answer to this question.

allow overhanging tree limbs on distribution overhead lines as long as there is twelve feet of clearance from the lines and the limb is sound and appears in good condition. On transmission overhead lines, the practice is similar, but overhanging tree limbs are trimmed to provide twenty-five feet of clearance from the lines. However, Hawaiian Electric is reviewing this practice and considering removal of all limbs overhanging transmission and distribution lines. If Hawaiian Electric's employees or contractors identify and report a large overhanging branch that appears to be at risk of falling onto Hawaiian Electric's power lines because it is dead, decayed, damaged, uprooted or otherwise structurally weak, then Hawaiian Electric's system arborist would assess the tree and take appropriate steps as described in the response to Question #6 above.

8. **In Hawaiian Electric's response to the Committee's August 30th letter, Hawaiian Electric stated that its inspection and mitigation programs on Maui to mitigate fire risk include "test and treat" inspections of poles. Hawaiian Electric further explained that its test and treat program includes inspection and tests of wood pole strength, anchor inspection, and treatment of poles for rot and termites. Hawaiian Electric stated it has performed test and treat on approximately 29,000 of approximately 31,000 wood poles in Maui County since 2013. Were any of the roughly 2,000 poles that had not been subject to test and treat located in the areas impacted by the fires on August 7th and 8th?**

Response:

As described in my letter dated October 12, 2023, Hawaiian Electric's wood poles in Lahaina, including those near the reported area of origin of the morning fire, were inspected in 2021 and 2022. The 2021-2022 Lahaina inspections were comprehensive, however, on occasion, poles were not inspected for various reasons, such as when customers refuse to provide access to poles on their property or when the pole is scheduled to be replaced. 27 out of 1,716 poles in the Lahaina area were not inspected during the 2021-2022 inspections cycle; 23 were not inspected due to access issues, and 4 were not inspected because they were scheduled for replacement in the near future.

Hawaiian Electric is not aware of any evidence that pole failures played any role in the ignitions related to the Olinda or Kula fires that ignited on August 7 and 8.

9. **Hawaiian Electric's response to the Committee's August 30, 2023, letter states that Hawaiian Electric began developing a Wildfire Mitigation Plan in 2019 and finalized the plan in January 2023. The Committee is aware of a document filed with the Hawaii Public Utility Commission (HPUC) on October 2, 2023.³ According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Hawaiian Electric shared a copy with the HPUC on September 27, 2023.⁴**

³ HAW. ELEC. CO., Wildfire Mitigation Plan, PUC HECO-IR-23, Docket No. 2022-0135 (Jan. 2023).

⁴ Dan Frosch & Katherine Blunt, *Hawaiian Electric's CEO Told Congress It Has a Wildfire Plan. That Was News to Regulators*, WALL ST. J., Oct. 5, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/climate-environment/hawaiian-electrics-ceo-told-congress-it-had-a-wildfire-plan-that-was-news-to-regulators-73f9d604>.

- a. **Had Hawaiian Electric shared a copy of the Wildfire Mitigation Plan with the HPUC prior to August 7, 2023?**

Response:

No. The WMP was developed voluntarily and was considered an internal working document that was intended to align and inform fire mitigation work across islands and programs, including Hawaiian Electric's Climate Adaptation Transmission and Distribution, Resilience Program.

- b. **Is this the same Wildfire Mitigation Plan document that Hawaiian Electric informed the Committee that it finalized in January 2023?**

Response:

Yes.

- c. **What changes, if any, did Hawaiian Electric make to the Wildfire Mitigation Plan between January 2023 and October 2, 2023?**

Response:

Between January and August 8, the WMP was used to inform and align internal work plans and programs in various divisions of the company, including the Climate Adaptation Transmission and Distribution Resilience Program Resilience Program. No changes were made to the WMP document during that time period. Since August 8, Hawaiian Electric has accelerated and intensified the implementation of this plan and has also taken other immediate action steps. These steps include, among other things, implementing fast trip settings on circuits, re-inspecting all lines for vulnerabilities, and initiating the process for replacing poles, conductor, and fuses in high risk areas. We are improving our situational awareness by deploying spotters in strategic fire risk locations to watch for ignition in the event of red flag warnings issued by the National Weather Service. In the future, technology will play a much larger role, with cameras and weather stations beginning their deployments now. In parallel, Hawaiian Electric has begun plans for other short-term and long-term actions, including a reassessment of its WMP in light of the events on August 8, to determine adjustments and additional measures to take beyond our immediate action steps to prevent future wildfires.

- i. **If any, did Hawaiian Electric contract or consult with any firm or individual in making these changes? If so, please list the individuals or parties.**

Response:

Hawaiian Electric has begun to engage with various stakeholders, including government agencies, about changes to its WMP that are under consideration.

10. Did Hawaiian Electric engage with any outside individuals, stakeholders, or other entities such as other utilities or private firms in drafting the Wildfire Mitigation Plan? If so, please list each and the date each was engaged.

Response:

Yes. As described in my letter dated September 19, 2023, Hawaiian Electric began developing the WMP in 2019 as an internal working document, to take proactive measures to address wildfire risks, and continued this analysis and development into 2023 when the WMP was finalized. Even before it was finalized, it was used to inform and align internal work plans and programs in various divisions of the company, including the Climate Adaption Transmission and Distribution Resilience Program. In developing the WMP, Hawaiian Electric hired a consultant, gathered information from other utilities and industry conferences, and engaged with the Honolulu Fire Department (“HFD”) and a Hawai‘i wildland fire specialist, among other stakeholders. Hawaiian Electric took all these steps and developed its WMP voluntarily. Unlike in California, there is no legal requirement to develop a WMP.

The consultant that Hawaiian Electric engaged to support development of the WMP was TLH Project Management (“TLH”). TLH was engaged around March 2019 and remained engaged throughout the development process.

Hawaiian Electric reviewed the wildfire mitigation plans of California utilities and engaged on utility best practices related to wildfire mitigation through Edison Electric Institute (“EEI”) workshops and initiatives. For example, Hawaiian Electric participated in EEI Wildfire Workshops in April 2019 and October 2019, where numerous electric utilities and other stakeholders presented on wildfire-related issues, including San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and representatives of the California Public Utilities Commission, and the Electric Power Research Institute.

Hawaiian Electric also engaged with the HFD from 2019 to 2021. In May 2019, for example, Hawaiian Electric met with the HFD’s Wildland Fire Program Manager and other HFD personnel to discuss issues related to Hawaiian Electric’s wildfire mitigation planning, and subsequently sought input from the HFD to assist the company in identifying higher fire risk areas on O‘ahu. Hawaiian Electric collaborated with the HFD to conduct two burn test exercises intended to evaluate the effectiveness of risk mitigation measures being considered by Hawaiian Electric, including fire retardant treatments for wood poles and new heat and smoke sensing technology. These exercises took place in October 2019 and August 2021.

Hawaiian Electric engaged in informal discussions with a wildland fire specialist associated with the University of Hawai‘i and Pacific Fire Exchange project in 2019 to discuss issues related to wildfire risk in Hawai‘i.

In addition, in late 2020, Hawaiian Electric met with a team based in Australia from Hawaiian Electric’s longstanding vegetation management contractor Asplundh to discuss issues related to vegetation in wildfire risk areas in Hawai‘i and the experience of Asplundh personnel in Australia with respect to vegetation and wildfire risk.

11. During the hearing, you stated that a preemptive shutoff plan was not appropriate for Hawaii. Additionally, the Wildfire Mitigation Plan stated, “For Hawaii, it is not recommended that Hawaiian Electric adopt this practice.”⁵

a. How did Hawaiian Electric make this determination?

Response:

Hawaiian Electric made the determination that a preemptive power shutoff plan was not appropriate for Hawai‘i after reviewing the wildfire mitigation plans of California utilities, identifying utility best practices and new technologies that could be applicable to Hawai‘i, undertaking inspections to assess higher fire risk areas across O‘ahu, Maui County, and Hawai‘i Island, and engaging with internal and external stakeholders and subject matter experts. At the time, Hawaiian Electric concluded that wildfire risk in Hawaii did not justify the detrimental effects of preemptive power shutoffs. Instead, Hawaiian Electric sought to mitigate wildfire risk through a score of system hardening projects and additional measures adapted from the wildfire mitigation plans of California utilities. The August 2023 fires have prompted us to revisit that determination. Hawaiian Electric has initiated discussions with government, emergency response, and community stakeholders to determine how a preemptive shutoff program could be safely and effectively implemented in Hawai‘i.

In developing our wildfire mitigations strategy, Hawaiian Electric considered and elected not to implement preemptive power shutoffs similar to the Public Safety Power Shutoff (“PSPS”) programs developed and implemented by the California utilities over the past several years in conjunction with the California Public Utilities Commission. Our planners determined that the risk of catastrophic wildfire was less severe in Hawai‘i than California based on our understanding of differences in vegetation, as well as our own experiences with wildfires until that time. Vegetation in Hawaii’s wildfire risk areas mostly consists of grasses and low-lying shrubs with few tall trees. As a result, there is meaningfully lower risk of line contact with vegetation. The risk of tall trees failing onto power lines—a key justification for preemptive power shutoffs in California—is significantly less in Hawai‘i. Hawai‘i has a different climate from California, as well as less fuel and combustion energy for a wildfire. Prior to the extreme weather event on August 8, Hawai‘i had no history of catastrophic wildfires comparable to California’s experiences. Over the past decade, 90% of fires in Hawaii have been less than one acre. These factors led Hawaiian Electric to conclude that wildfire risk on Hawaii was significantly less than in California.

⁵ HAW. ELEC. CO., *supra* note 1, at 11.

Against perceived lower risk, Hawaiian Electric also weighed the wide-ranging impacts of preemptive shutoffs on our communities. Shutoffs mitigate wildfire risk through significant sacrifice and introduce different risks to life, health and safety, critical infrastructure, businesses, and our economy. Hawaiian Electric is responsible for providing reliable power to our customers and power shutoffs raise significant safety concerns. Deliberate shutoffs deprive communities of power for medical devices or air conditioning for the elderly and those with special medical needs; electricity to help people exit their houses and garages in emergency situations; traffic signals; closed schools; and reduced communications and digital access to emergency updates. There are also impacts to water pumping that can impede fire suppression efforts. Indeed, Hawaiian Electric understands that many water pumping stations on Maui and O‘ahu lack backup power. Our planners also understood that preemptive power shutoff programs are controversial and not industry standard outside of California.

Thus, at the time, we concluded that wildfire risk in Hawaii did not justify the detrimental effects of preemptive shutoffs. Instead, Hawaiian Electric sought to mitigate wildfire risk through a coordinated strategy focused on inspections, system hardening, situational awareness, and system operations. In addition to a focused effort to harden our grid against extreme weather events, our wildfire mitigation strategy includes automatic reclose blocking during Red Flag Warning and other high wind conditions. This technique has been in practice on Maui for a number of years.

The August 2023 fires have prompted us to revisit the assumptions and determinations of risk shaping our wildfire mitigation efforts. Planning and discussions are now underway to assess whether a preemptive power shutoff program is appropriate for Hawai‘i.

b. Did Hawaiian Electric contract or consult with any firm or individual in making this determination? If so, who?

Response:

As described above and in the response to Question 10, Hawaiian Electric’s approach to wildfire mitigation was informed by input from many facets of the company, by review of the wildfire mitigation plans of California utilities, by the wildfire mitigation planning inspections undertaken by Hawaiian Electric, and by external engagement.

12. According to the Wildfire Mitigation Plan, “Hawaiian Electric’s vegetation management programs involve trimming, removing, and herbicide spraying of vegetation on prescribed cycles and is limited to the boundaries of the right-of-way and roadsides.”⁶ The Wildfire Mitigation Plan also stated, “Further trimming of the

⁶ *Id.* at 36.

already low-lying vegetation will not likely produce any appreciable results in the potential wildfire areas.”⁷ It also stated, “Vegetation Management contractor, Asplundh, confirmed that the vegetation type that exists in the potential wildfire areas of Oahu and Maui do not require more trimming for wildfire mitigation purposes.”⁸

- a. **How did Hawaiian Electric determine that trimming low-lying vegetation would not likely produce appreciable results?**

Response:

Hawaiian Electric oriented the WMP around actions it could take to prevent its lines from starting a fire. Hawaiian Electric concluded that adjusting vegetation management plans in higher fire threat areas would not appreciably reduce the risk that its lines could start a fire because the vegetation in those areas did not pose a more significant risk of falling or growing into lines than vegetation in other areas of the Company’s territory. While the Company’s easements generally only allow trimming of vegetation that is in the way of or close to our lines, the Company looks forward to participating in discussions around grassland maintenance, which is a community-wide issue.

- b. **Did Hawaiian Electric contract or consult with anyone in addition to Asplundh in reaching this determination? If so please list that individual or entity.**

Response:

No.

- c. **When did Hawaiian Electric consult with Asplundh to reach the above conclusion? Please provide the specific date, if possible.**

Response:

The meeting occurred on November 23, 2020.

13. **Please provide all documents to show all vegetation management work done by or for Hawaiian Electric from 2019 to August 7th, 2023, including schedules, inspection records, plans, invoices, contracts and subcontracts.**

Response:

Among the documents responsive to this question are approximately 290 contracts and work authorizations, and 4,472 invoices that contain confidential vendor pricing information, and an inspection log that contains over 5,200 entries that contain personal

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.* at 37.

identifiable information of customers and/or employees. Included in the documents in Attachment 5 are indices of the contracts/work authorizations and invoices, and samples of the types of contracts, work authorizations, invoices, and part of the inspection log, with confidential information redacted. The confidential information contained in each of these documents must be redacted through a time-consuming process, and due to the volume of documents, Hawaiian Electric was not able to complete all of the redactions to submit with this response.

Hawaiian Electric is submitting with this response as Attachments 6 through 30 documents that have been redacted, and unless the subcommittee advises otherwise, will supplement its response with the remaining redacted documents within ten business days of this response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelee Kimura", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shelee Kimura
President & CEO

cc: The Honorable Kathy Castor, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Attachments