



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committees on Government Operations, Water and Land, and Public Safety,
Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
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SB 2334 – RELATING TO PLANNING

Chairs Kim, Rhoads, and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Ruderman, Gabbard, and Wakai and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i is in favor of this legislation provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Supplemental Budget.

The purpose of this act is to require the State and counties to incorporate predictions of sea level rise (SLR) and other climate change hazards and mitigation opportunities into applicable plans, strategies, and mapping, in order to increase our State's resiliency and ability to properly respond to natural disasters.

University of Hawai'i students, researchers, and faculty were integral to the modeling and mapping of the future impacts of sea level rise that formed the scientific basis for the recently released Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report. This report identified that at *intermediate* scenarios of future sea level rise over 25,800 acres of land in Hawai'i become unusable for development, and human habitation. Over 6,500 structures, 20,000 residents, and 28 miles of major roads, in total worth over \$19 billion, will be permanently displaced before the end of the century. Higher scenarios will have increasingly devastating effects. Adapting to SLR is critically important for Hawai'i. This bill takes a strong step in that direction.

SLR is a slowly developing disaster that exerts chronic stress on our soci-economic fabric. Planning to adapt to SLR by leveraging post-event opportunities is an internationally recognized planning tool that is being considered in many coastal communities. In the long run, it will benefit Hawai'i's economy in multiple ways: enhancing tourism, public access to the ocean, open space, and the environmental network along our shoreline. All of which are goals of the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program.