



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment
and

Senate Committee on Water & Land
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By

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And

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And

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HB 461 HD1 – RELATING TO SEA LEVEL RISE

Chairs Gabbard and Kahele, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Charles (Chip) Fletcher and I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 461 HD1 on behalf of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). This measure is to support and direct the Hawai'i climate change mitigation and adaptation commission to make further progress towards addressing the impacts of sea level rise, to identify critical public infrastructure in impacted areas, and to provide policy direction to the legislature about how to move forward with concrete strategies for mitigation and adaptation to sea level rise.

Since its formation in 2017, the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (HCCAC) has played a transformational role in building community recognition of the impacts of global warming in Hawai'i. The release of their seminal Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaption report catalyzed mayors on Maui, O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i Island to recognize the urgency of developing plans to improve community resiliency in the face of rising ocean waters.

Dr. Makena Coffman and I serve as the Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, on the City and County of Honolulu Climate Change Commission (HCCC). We want to

acknowledge that staff of HCCAC have made a special point of communicating and integrating their plans and activities with members of HCCC. This effort extends to other members of the UHM campus as well. Together the two commissions have been able to participate jointly in special planning groups, public events, and to otherwise increase their achievements by the leveraging created by state staff. As this bill makes clear, there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done and it will take all of us working collaboratively to maintain and enhance public health and safety in the face of a changing climate.