



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education and
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 3:05 p.m.

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HB 2302 HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM

Chairs Kim and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Kidani and DeCoite, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) supports HB 2302 HD1, provided that its passage does not replace the priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Budget.

This Bill is urgently needed because there is more hazard risk than people realize, particularly with regard to hurricanes. Note the following:

- 1) A Pacific Disaster Study conducted after the near hit of Hurricane Lane in 2018, estimated a Category 2 strike on O'ahu would result in 52,000 displaced households and 27 billion dollars in damage.
- 2) A 2019 Hurricane Behavioral Study by FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency found the average citizen was ill-prepared and had not properly gathered their supplies or readied their homes. The number one recommendation was increased education and outreach. The second was help in hardening homes. Both are important to make the State resilient.
- 3) A 2019 Communication Outreach and Education Study conducted by Hawai'i Sea Grant, at the request of the 2017 HI State Legislature, concluded that education and outreach should be significantly increased with traditional and non-traditional methods on a continuous long-term basis to inform and prepare citizens in the State. The report was submitted to the 2020 Legislature and is available online at the link below.

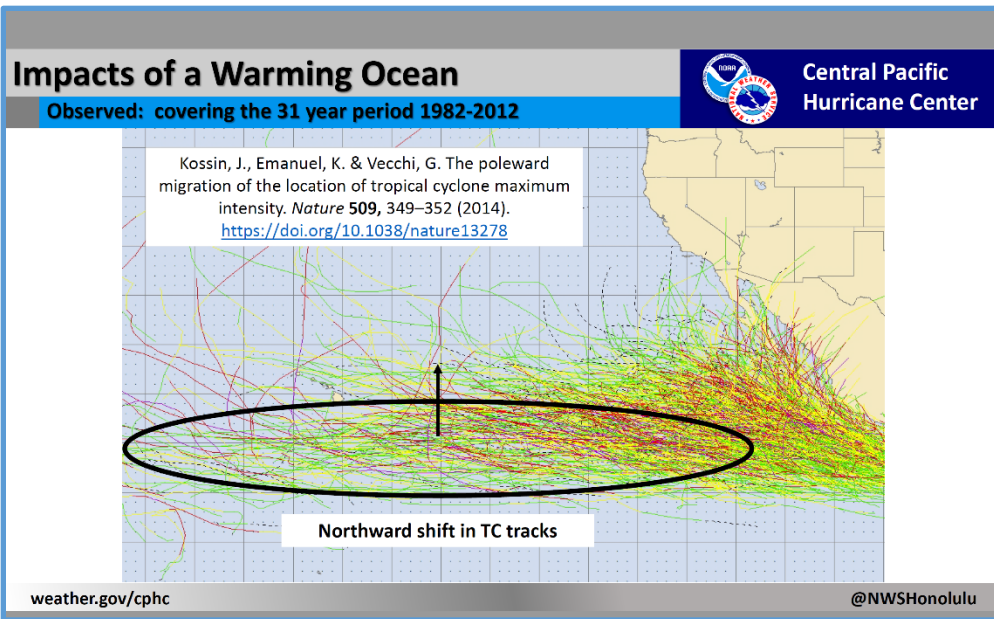
- 4) In 2020 Hurricane Douglas threatened the Hawaiian Islands and a Hurricane warning was called for O'ahu for the first time in recent history. A 2021 presentation by the Central Pacific Hurricane Center indicates tropical cyclone tracks may shift north in the future attributed to warming waters and climate change. See graphic below. This would increase the risk of Hurricanes such as Douglas impacting the State.

Hawai'i Sea Grant is well positioned to continue and increase its education and outreach of hurricane risk and preparation around the State. The *Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards – 4th Edition* (link below) provides useful tips regarding readiness for natural hazards such as tsunami, earthquakes, floods and hurricanes. The handbook lists local civil defense and emergency management agency information, provides guidance on emergency supplies, evacuation planning, and explains various measures to reduce property damage through home retrofit. This publication has gone through ten print runs with over 100,000 copies and has been modified for thirteen U.S. states and other countries based off the Hawai'i book. The 4th Edition, released in late 2019, was a major update with more options on home retrofit, as well as evacuation planning guidance and sections on volcanoes and climate change.

In the last three years, Sea Grant has participated in over 100 outreach events, and given almost 30,000 Homeowner's Handbooks. We have provided free books to individual homeowners as well as large organizations such as: (Catholic Charities – 280), (AARP – 63), (Be Ready Mānoa - 80), (Zephyr Insurance – 200), (Kāhala Emergency Fair – 80), (Cross Island Resilience Network consisting of 17 Communities on O'ahu – 2,800), Hawai'i Public Library System – 480 with another 600 requested for all 51 public libraries around the State). All Emergency Management and Civil Defense Agencies have receive an initial allotment of 1,000 books. Maui Emergency Management Agency has requested another 600. It is estimated about 7,000 homes have been retrofitted since 2007, through the education and outreach of many organizations, including Hawai'i Sea Grant. Many homeowner's who retrofit plan on using their locations to shelter their families and/or friends, so there is a multiplier in the relief on hurricane shelter demand.

Hawai'i Sea Grant is committed to continued partnership with all emergency management and civil defense agencies at the State and county level in order to make our communities more resilient and foster a greater culture of preparedness in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Homeowners Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards – 4th Edition

<http://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/homeowners-handbook-to-prepare-for-natural-hazards/>

Communication Plan and Outreach Strategy Submitted to the 2020 Legislature

<https://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Communication-Strategy-Outreach-Plan-V.1.pdf>