

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM REPORT



REPORT TO THE 2012 LEGISLATURE

REPORT FROM THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I PUBLIC POLICY CENTER
ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTING
SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

Act 181, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2011

December 2011

REPORT ON ACT 181, RELATING TO SUSTAINABILITY SUBMITTED TO THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Purpose of the Report

This report is submitted in accordance with Act 181, 2011 Session Laws of Hawai'i, entitled "Relating to Sustainability." Act 181 directed the Social Sciences Public Policy Center ("SSPPC"), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, in consultation with the Hawai'i State Office of Planning ("OP"), to submit a status and progress report to the 2012 Legislature to:

- (1) identify the progress made in implementing the seven sustainability guidelines and principles set forth in the Act, namely,
 - a. Encouraging balanced economic, social, community and environmental priorities;
 - b. Encouraging planning that respects and promotes living within the natural resources and limits of the State;
 - c. Promoting a diversified and dynamic economy;
 - d. Encouraging respect for the host culture.
 - e. Promoting decisions based on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations;
 - f. Considering the principles of the ahupua'a system; and
 - g. Emphasizing that everyone, including individuals, families, communities, businesses, and government, has the responsibility for achieving a sustainable Hawaii.
- (2) provide recommendations for legislation or other actions to facilitate their full implementation.

B. Development of the Report

The report is based on consultation with the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i and Honolulu; the state administration through its Office of Planning; and on responses to a community survey of 88 organizations and individuals throughout the state who participated in the development of the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan (H2050) and/or expressed interest in sustainability.

C. Major Findings

Major progress has been made by each of the counties. Hawaii and Kauai counties have adopted sustainability plans. The City and County of Honolulu and Hawaii and Kauai counties have established a sustainability coordinator or manager position and Maui County has an environmental

coordinator. The report includes a brief summary of the work by each of the counties in implementing the sustainability priority guidelines and principles.

The State is committed to implementing Act 181 across all its agencies, with the support and coordination of the Office of Planning (“OP”) through its administration of the Hawaii State Plan, HRS Chapter 226. Using the Administration’s *New Day Plan* priorities as a guide, the State is working on major initiatives to implement the sustainability guidelines and principles set forth in Act 181. The Governor also created a Sustainability Working Group to identify cross discipline projects and programs that implement sustainability. Examples of some of the state initiatives that advance sustainability include: (1) the Hawaii State Energy Office’s *Hawai’i Clean Energy Initiative* to achieve energy independence; (2) the Department of Land and Natural Resources recent launching of *The Rain Follows the Forest Plan*, which seeks to ensure mauka watersheds are fully functioning to ensure fresh water resources for Hawaii’s people, and (3) the Office of Planning collaboration with public, private, and community stakeholders to update the *Hawai’i Ocean Resources Management Plan* to facilitate comprehensive ocean resources management throughout the State. These and other projects, programs and plans are cited in the report.

Community organizations have also continued efforts to advance sustainable principles and practices. Eighty-eight organizations and/or individuals responded to the community survey and an overwhelming majority are involved in activities advancing the seven sustainability guidelines and principles, ranging from the highest involvement in planning that respects and promotes living within the natural resources and limits of the State (88%); followed by encouraging balanced economic, social, community and environmental priorities and encouraging respect for the host culture (84%); promoting decisions based on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations and emphasizing that everyone has the responsibility for achieving a sustainable Hawai’i (83%); promoting a diversified and dynamic economy (70%), with 60% working on increasing the competitiveness of Hawai’i’s workforce; and considering the principles of the ahupua’a system in decision making (67%). Organizations involved in implementing the sustainability principles were primarily represented by the non-profit (37%), government (20%), education (17%), and business (16%) sectors.

D. Major Recommendations

County and state representatives and other community survey respondents provided a number of recommendations to more fully implement each of the Act 181 sustainability principles, which have been included in the report. The following are major recommendations that have strong support by government and community organizations that will facilitate full implementation of the sustainability guidelines and principles:

Recommendation 1 - Hawaii Statewide Sustainability Partnership: Convene a statewide network of state, county, private sector and community organizations that are recognized trailblazers in sustainability (e.g. Kauai Planning and Action Alliance (KPAA), Kanu Hawaii, the Hawai’i Green Growth Initiative (HGG) and others); and establish an organization – The Hawai’i State Wide Sustainability Partnership – to advance

collaboration, action, and accountability to fully implement the Hawai'i sustainability goals and principles.

While many sustainability programs and activities are already underway, there was consensus throughout the counties of the need to share resources and lessons learned, facilitate collaboration, increase support for implementation, monitor and report on progress to key leaders and the public.

It is thus recommended that a working group of government, non-profit, education, business and other interested organizations committed to sustainability and representing various interest sectors and counties be convened to establish the Hawai'i Statewide Sustainability Partnership to fully implement the sustainability goals and principles envisioned in the H2050 Plan and Act 181. It is further recommended that The Hawai'i State Legislature and the state and county administrations provide leadership support, which should include funding of the Partnership (for staff, travel for neighbor island members, and communication, including website development and maintenance) and participation by its various agencies.

Recommendation 2 - Hawai'i Sustainability Indicators: Appropriate funds to the Office of Planning to support development of statewide sustainability measures of accountability, including benchmarks, indicators, data and data sources.

A number of communities and organizations have or are in the process of developing indicators and benchmarks for measuring progress. A beginning set of indicators to measure progress in attaining the sustainability priorities and goals were identified by the SSPPC in its 2010 Report. Since then, counties such as Hawaii and Kauai have been working with community organizations to develop indicators to measure progress. These and others should be further reviewed by a cross-sector of government and community representatives to determine key indicators for the state and the starting point for identifying benchmarks to measure progress in the near and long term. As importantly, the Hawaii State Office of Planning and representatives from the several counties have agreed to work together on long-range planning on sustainability, including updating the inventory of sustainability activities throughout the state and developing sustainability indicators. This should also include translating the Act 181 sustainability principles into clear objectives, specific actions, and accountability measures.

It is therefore recommended that the Office of Planning administer the program with funding in the amount of \$80,000.00 to procure a one-year contract for a coordinator/facilitator to develop the program and coordinate progress among the state and all counties, including data collection, analysis, and reporting of accountability measures.

For more details on the study and recommendations, please view a copy of the full report at: <http://www.publicpolicycenter.hawaii.edu/>.