



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committees on  
Energy and Environment, Water and Land, and  
Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Friday, February 13, 2015 at 2:45 pm

By  
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And  
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### SB 499 – RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Chairs Gabbard, Thielen and Espero, Vice Chairs Green, Galuteria and Baker, and members of the committees:

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget for the University of Hawai'i.

We support the consideration of impacts related to sea level rise in any environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for major capital improvement projects.

The latest published research (Kopp et al., 2014) concludes that projected future heights of sea level for Honolulu will reach a mean of 1 ft by 2050 and 2.8 ft by 2100, and potentially a maximum of over 4.5 ft by end of the century.

In recognition of the threat of sea level rise, the Obama Administration has recently set a requirement that federal agencies plan for rising seas. Executive Order 11988 is now amended that all projects using federal funding must meet a federal flood risk standard that either:

- 1) Use data and methods “informed by best-available, actionable climate science”;
- 2) Build 2 ft above the 100-year flood elevation for standard projects, and 3 ft above for critical buildings (hospitals and evacuation centers); or
- 3) Build to the 500-year flood elevation.

The action proposed in this bill is consistent with these important steps and will result in significant savings and hazard reduction for the State of Hawai'i if implemented.

*Kopp, R.E., et al., 2014 Probabilistic 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> century sea-level projections at a global network of tide gauge sites. Earths Future. DOI:10.1002/2014EF000239*