



**KA 'AHA KENEKOA
THE SENATE**

**KE KAPIKALA (STATE CAPITOL)
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813**

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

**COMMITTEES ON JUDICIARY AND AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT HOSTS
DISCUSSION ON FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE
AND THE LEGALITY OF THE FEDERAL ACTION**

HONOLULU – Monday morning, the Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Judiciary, chaired by Senator **Karl Rhoads** (Senate District 13 – Dowsett Highlands, Pu'unui, Nu'uauu, Pacific Heights, Pauoa, Punchbowl, Pālama, Liliha, Iwilei, Chinatown, and Downtown) and the Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, chaired by Senator **Mike Gabbard** (Senate District 21 – Kapolei, Makakilo, Kalaeloa, Honokai Hale, portions of Fernandez Village, 'Ewa, and Ko 'Olina) held an informational briefing to hear from Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation Commission Coordinator **Leah Laramee** and Retired Associate Justice **Michael D. Wilson** (Hawai'i Supreme Court 2014-2024).

[Presentation Slides](#)

This briefing focused on the impact of recent federal policy changes and funding cuts and delays on Hawai'i's residents and the State's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. It also discussed the legality of those federal actions.

Laramee began the presentation linking the effects of climate change with residents' health, safety, and affordability. She warned that a multitude of actions by the current federal administration threaten progress in clean energy and, in turn, residents' right to health, safety, and affordability. The passage of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (Public Law No. 119-21) in July 2025 has put around \$651 million of outstanding clean energy projects in the State at risk due to the loss of federal support and programs. Several environmental and conservation focused programs face repeal of unobligated balances, including the \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) program, most USDA agricultural conservation programs, ecosystem restoration programs, national parks, among others detailed in the presentation.

Laramee also noted that the State Attorney General has had to bring or join numerous climate-related legal challenges - 41 since the beginning of the year - to protect the State's clean energy, climate and environmental laws and policies.

Wilson's presentation, titled "The Rule of Law, Civilization's Greatest Tool to Achieve Justice, Is Under Attack in Hawai'i" applauded the State of Hawai'i for being the "bleeding front line of climate change, and the foremost champion among all states of climate rights for the future generations of our country." He addressed the growing wave of climate-related litigation, pointing out that as of December 2022, there have been 2,180 lawsuits filed around the world relating to climate.

Hawai'i's right to bring such litigation, he noted, has been threatened by the federal government's attempts to block such litigation. Wilson emphasized the Hawai'i Judiciary's role in addressing climate change, stating "We rejected the idea that the courts don't have a duty to protect future generations, our population, from this existential threat." Other measures taken by the State, including the state constitutional right of every person to a "clean and healthful environment" (Article XI, Section 9) and the adoption of the goals of the Paris climate agreement, provide support when the State needs to respond to inappropriate federal action.

Wilson also discussed the potential economic impacts and legal ramifications of climate change in Hawai'i. He noted that the loss of Waikiki Beach could result in an annual loss of \$2 billion in visitor expenditures by mid-century, illustrating the profound economic risks of inaction.

Both presenters offered recommendations to strengthen Hawai'i's preparedness for emerging climate threats and federal actions. Suggestions included bolstering the State's energy programs, supporting the Department of the Attorney General in climate-related litigation efforts, and developing comprehensive plans to address not only the effects but also the root causes of climate change. Laramie emphasized the importance of embedding climate considerations in all areas of policy and budgeting, stating "The key thing is to put a climate lens on everything... the more money that we can invest in adaptation, mitigation, resilience programs, the more money we're going to save in the long term."

"The briefing today was a sobering reminder that climate change is not a distant or abstract issue. It directly impacts the health, safety, and economic future of Hawai'i residents," said Senator Rhoads. "Our responsibility as lawmakers is to take proactive measures to protect our communities and uphold the rights of future generations to a safe and sustainable environment. This includes challenging federal actions that are likely unlawful or infringe on matters controlled by the State."

"Hawai'i remains at the front lines of climate leadership," said Senator Gabbard. "The loss of federal funding for clean energy projects threatens much needed years of progress toward a more sustainable future. Now is the time to double down on our commitment to renewable energy, local food security, and climate adaptation to safeguard our islands."

View the original Hearing Notice [HERE](#)
Watch the video recording [HERE](#)

This informational briefing is part of a series of informational briefings on the rule of law in relation to the recent actions of the Trump Administration and how its decisions are impacting Hawai'i. Information about past and upcoming briefings can be accessed on the Senate Judiciary Committee webpage [HERE](#).

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ABOUT THE HAWAI'I STATE SENATE MAJORITY

Hawai'i State Senate consists of 25 members who serve staggered four-year terms. The Senate Majority consists of 22 Democrats for the 33rd Legislature, which convened on January 15, 2025. For the latest news and updates, follow the Senate Majority on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or visit <https://www.hawaiisenatemajority.com>.

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