

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 111 / SENATE RESOLUTION 92

DECLARING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND REQUESTING STATEWIDE COORDINATION TO IDENTIFY, PLAN FOR, AND CREATE CROSS-SECTOR SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN HAWAII'S PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SCR111 / SR 92 that declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and requesting statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis.

The Department of Agriculture agrees with the statements in the resolution and recognizes the need to prepare for a statewide, interagency response to protect the food systems which are central to providing for the health and well-being of the residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions.



SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 10:48:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Henry Curtis	Testifying for Life of the Land	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Senators

Life of the Land thanks the Climate Change & Health Working Group for writing this critical resolution.

Please pass this very important resolution.

Mahalo



HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS
Chair

John A. Burns School of Medicine,
Department of Pediatrics

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD
Secretary

State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender

Carissa Holley, MEd
Treasurer

Hale Makua Health Services

Debbie Erskine

ARCH-MEPS Consulting LLC, Owner

Camonia Graham - Tutt, PhD
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

Jennifer José Lo, MD
Hawai'i Health Partners

Misty Pacheco, DrPH
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP
Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD

Medical-Legal Partnership
For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai
HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH

John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native
Hawaiian Research Office

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 15, 2025

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

RE: Support for SCR 111/SR 92, Declaring A Public Health Emergency Relating To Climate Change And Requesting Statewide Coordination To Identify, Plan For, And Create Cross-Sector Solutions To Strengthen Hawaii's Public Health Response To The Climate Crisis

Hrg: Monday, March 17, 2025, at 1:01 PM, Conference Room 224

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) is in **support of SCR 111 / SR 92**, which declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and calls for statewide cross-sector coordination to develop and implement solutions that bolster Hawai'i's public health resilience to the climate crisis.

Climate Change is a Public Health Crisis

Climate change has moved beyond being just an environmental concern to become one of the greatest threats to human health worldwide. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) note that climate stressors—including extreme heat, rising sea levels, stronger storms, and vector-borne diseases—disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.¹

As recognized by the legislature in 2023, climate change will intensify extreme weather events in Hawai'i, increase temperatures, threaten local agriculture and food security, and increase the risk of vector-borne and waterborne diseases [Figure 1].² Rising sea levels and heavy storms strain our outdated cesspools, degrading water quality, and placing our fragile reefs and coastlines at risk. Moreover, "eco-grief," the overwhelming emotional response to the destruction of our natural environment, can pose significant mental health challenges, especially across our islands where culture, livelihoods, and a sense of place are deeply tied to the land and ocean.^{3,4}

With sea level rise and warmer oceans, Hawai'i is already witnessing coastal erosion and more extreme weather patterns, compromising critical public health

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>

² https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/archives/measure_indiv_Archives.aspx?billtype=HCR&billnumber=192&year=2023

³ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7830022>

⁴ <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.872544/full>



infrastructure and housing. These impacts also reverberate economically, potentially increasing housing instability, mental health issues, and social inequities. Public health must therefore be at the forefront of any concerted climate action strategy. Declaring climate change to be a public health emergency creates a framework for decisive, coordinated action.

Cross-Sector Coordination is Essential

Addressing climate-related public health risks cannot be left solely to the Department of Health. Because climate change influences factors well beyond the traditional scope of “health”, a cross-sector, inter-departmental approach is the only path to effectively strengthen our public health systems and infrastructure. Agencies overseeing land, water, agriculture, transportation, and emergency services may not typically see themselves as having a health-related mandate, yet their decisions on resource management, urban planning, and disaster preparedness directly shape community health outcomes.

By calling for every department to reflect on its role in mitigating and adapting to climate-health impacts, this resolution fosters a culture shift in which all agencies recognize how their policies and operations can either exacerbate or alleviate public health threats. This proclamation underscores the urgency for holistic action, ensuring that Hawai'i can implement comprehensive solutions to protect residents and develop more resilient infrastructure in the face of an escalating climate crisis.

Building on Hawai'i's History of Leadership

Hawai'i set a precedent by becoming the first state to declare a climate emergency in 2021, underscoring our collective will to confront climate change.⁵ However, that emergency declaration did not explicitly prioritize public health or mobilize necessary health-focused resources. This resolution builds on our established environmental commitments by explicitly addressing the human health dimension, ensuring that community well-being remains at the forefront of climate adaptation and resilience efforts.

By declaring a public health emergency and calling for broad statewide collaboration, SCR 111 / SR 92 affirms Hawai'i's commitment to safeguarding the health of its residents. This resolution is an important step in strengthening our state's capacity to identify, plan for, and implement the cross-sector actions needed to protect our communities from the growing threats posed by climate change.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure and stand with Hawai'i's residents in protecting public health from the climate crisis.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James McCallen", written in a cursive style.

James McCallen
Director of Community Preparedness and Resilience

⁵https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/archives/measure_indiv_Archives.aspx?billtype=SCR&billnumber=44&year=2021

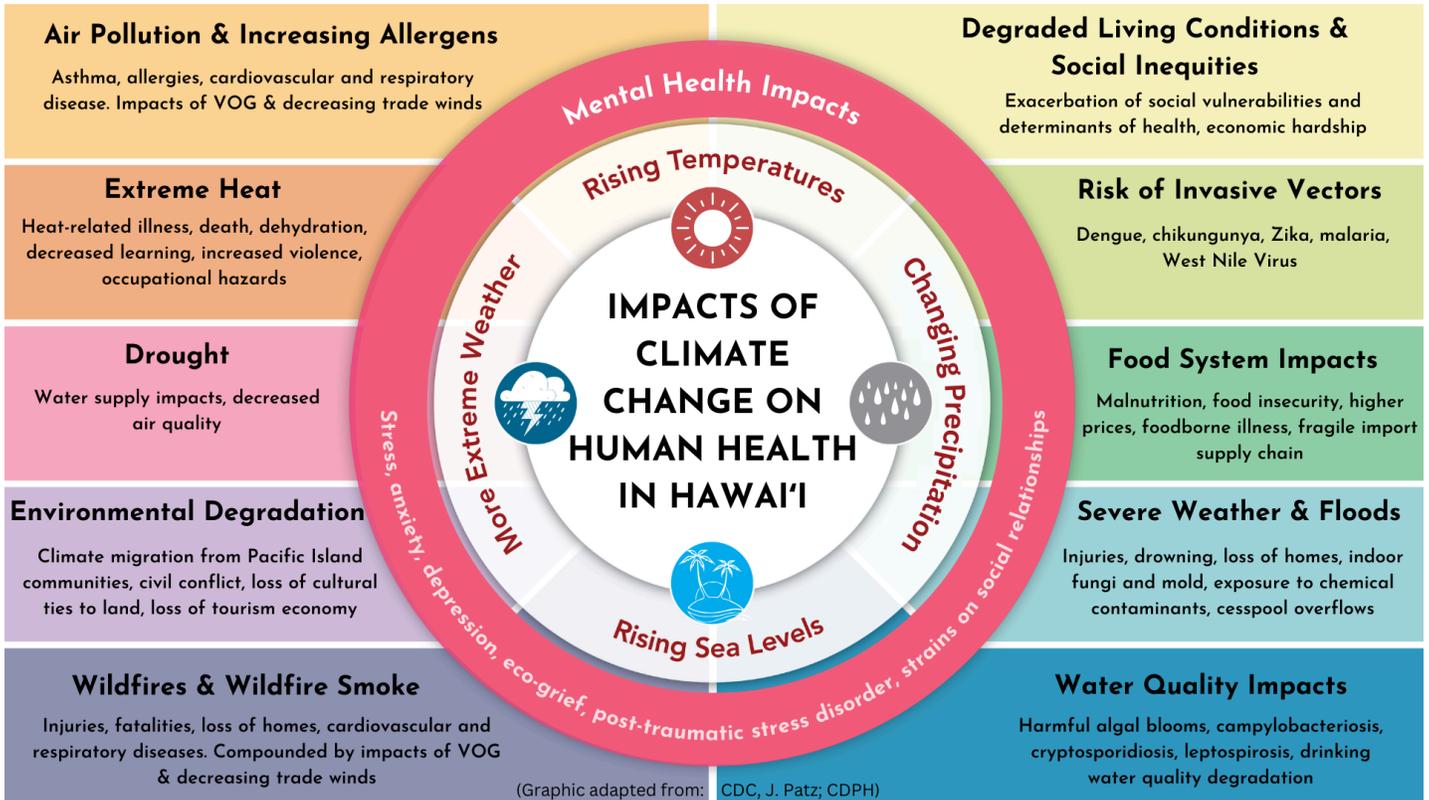


Figure 1. *Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in Hawai'i*, Hawai'i Department of Health (Adapted from California Department of Public Health and CDC).



Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

Testimony on SCR111 / SCR92

Relating to a Climate Health Emergency

March 17th, 2025

1:01 PM

Room 224

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) is a cross-sector collaborative interested in strengthening climate and health resiliency in Hawai'i. CCHWG supports this resolution, which urges the State to declare a public health emergency relating to climate change.

Testimony of the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group

**In Support of SCR 111 & SR 92
Relating to Energy Assistance**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) *strongly supports* SCR111/SR92, a resolution calling for a public health emergency in regards to climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai'i's response.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten the physical and mental health of people across Hawai'i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of "eco-grief" as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately

impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the greatest socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a crucial step in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. This declaration directs focus and resources toward vulnerable populations – including keiki, kūpuna, and those living in areas with limited access to healthcare or reliable infrastructure. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. Aligning policies across agencies – from land and water management and urban planning to emergency services – will help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai'i residents.

The Legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications, building on that foundation by urging every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. In doing so, Hawai'i can create robust, preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

The Climate Change & Health Working Group



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i

March 15, 2025

To: Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

Date: Monday, March 17, 2025, **Time:** 1:01 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of SCR111/SR92 - Climate Change as a Public Health Emergency

Aloha e Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports SCR111/SR92, which declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and requests statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis.

Key Points in Support:

1. **Climate Change as a Public Health Emergency:** Climate change directly impacts public health through extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and sea-level rise. These contribute to health issues such as heat-related illnesses, poor air quality, and the spread of vector-borne diseases.
2. **Disproportionate Impact on Vulnerable Populations:** The climate crisis disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, and low-income communities. Addressing these disparities is critical to ensuring equitable public health outcomes.
3. **Proactive Planning and Cross-Sector Solutions:** Statewide coordination and collaboration across government agencies, businesses, and communities are necessary to implement preventative measures, improve disaster preparedness, and foster innovative, cross-sector solutions.
4. **Strengthening Resilience and Health Infrastructure:** Investing in sustainable infrastructure and health systems is essential to mitigating the long-term impacts of climate change while enhancing community resilience and ensuring the health and well-being of all residents.

5. **Economic and Environmental Benefits:** Addressing climate-related health challenges can reduce healthcare costs, lessen the burden on emergency services, and create opportunities for green jobs and sustainable development, benefiting both public health and the economy.
6. **Commitment to a Sustainable Future:** Declaring a public health emergency underscores Hawaii's commitment to protecting its residents and paving the way for a healthier, more sustainable future for current and future generations.
7. **Alignment with Global Goals:** Proactively addressing the health impacts of the climate crisis aligns with international efforts to combat climate change, showcasing Hawaii as a leader in climate action and public health initiatives.

We commend the Legislature for recognizing the profound public health implications of the climate crisis and urge your committee to pass SCR111/SR92. The resolution is a vital step toward ensuring the safety, health, and resilience of Hawaii's communities in the face of an unprecedented global challenge.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this important measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick
Co-Chairs Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Monday, March 17, 2025, 1:01pm

In strong support of SCR111/SR92

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the AEN committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of SCR111/SR92** that declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and requesting statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis.

Public health is already being impacted by climate change through increased heat, vector-borne diseases, crop failure and food insecurity, water insecurity, waterborne diseases, extreme weather events, air pollution, and adverse mental health impacts. Because we have waited too long to mitigate CO₂ emissions, adverse health impacts will increase in future years. Moreover, our low and moderate-income residents, seniors, and indigenous residents will disproportionately experience these impacts.

Consequently, statewide efforts to actively examine how climate breakdown is impacting human health, and a collaboration of state agencies, local governments, and community organizations to develop a public health strategy to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis are critically needed. Please pass SCR111/SR92 along with measures that will boldly act to address the root issue creating this problem, our carbon pollution.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MARCH 17, 2025

SCR 111/SR 92, DECLARING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND REQUESTING STATEWIDE COORDINATION TO IDENTIFY, PLAN FOR, AND CREATE CROSS-SECTOR SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN HAWAII'S PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

POSITION: SUPPORT

Coalition Earth supports SCR 111/SR 92, which declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and requests statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai'i's public health response to the climate crisis.

According to a report produced by the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, global sea levels could rise more than three feet by 2100, with more recent projections showing this occurring as early as 2060. In turn, over the next 30 to 70 years, approximately 6,500 structures and 19,800 people statewide will be exposed to chronic flooding. Additionally, an estimated \$19 billion in economic loss would result from chronic flooding of land and structures located in exposure areas. Finally, approximately 38 miles of coastal roads and 550 cultural sites would be chronically flooded, on top of the 13 miles of beaches that have already been lost on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui to erosion fronting shoreline armoring.

As we work to reduce carbon emissions and stave off the worst consequences of climate change, we must begin preparing for the adverse impact of sea level rise on our shores. We are now quantifying the speed at which we must act. We cannot continue to develop the 25,800-acre statewide sea level rise exposure area—one-third of which is designated for urban use—without risking massive structural damage and, potentially, great loss of life.

Just two years ago, we witnessed the impact of the climate emergency on our shores. On August 8, 2023, wildfires swept across Maui and killed at least 100 people, making it one of the nation's deadliest natural disasters. The spread of the fires has been attributed to climate change conditions, such as unusually dry landscapes and the confluence of a strong high-pressure system

to the north and Hurricane Dora to the south. The wildfires destroyed over 2,200 structures, including numerous residential buildings, historic landmarks, and school facilities. In September 2023, a report from the United States Department of Commerce estimated the total economic damage of the wildfires to be roughly \$5.5 billion. Investing in renewable energy generation could not be more urgent, given the growing threat of climate catastrophes to our island home.

Therefore, **our state should take steps to hasten our transition to a clean energy economy and continue our fight against climate change, including by connecting the climate crisis to public health outcomes.** According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, climate change can exacerbate existing health threats and create new public health challenges. It affects the physical environment, as well as all aspects of natural and human systems, including social and economic conditions and the functioning of health systems.

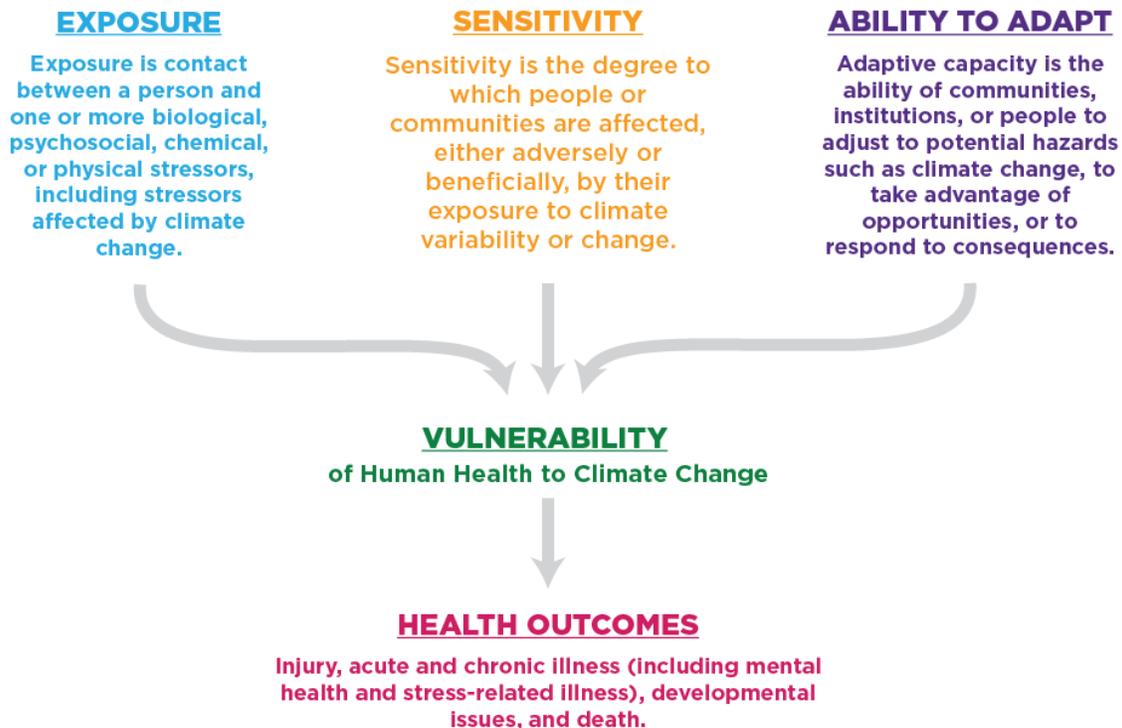


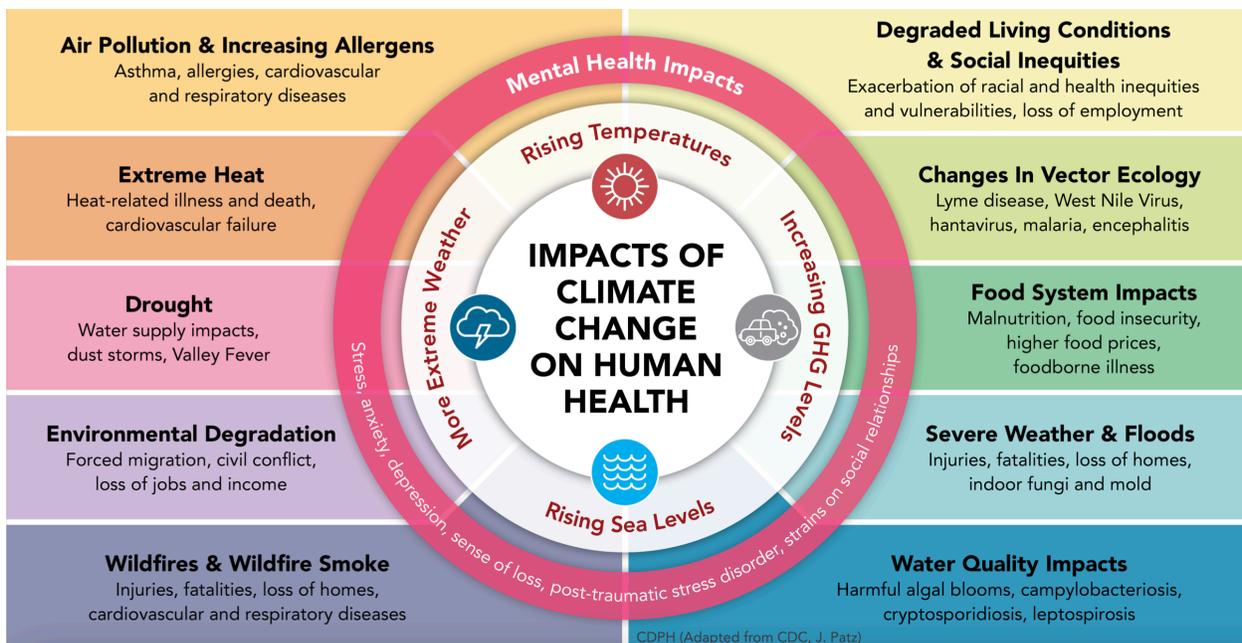
Figure adapted by the EPA from the Global Change Research Program’s 2016 Climate and Health Assessment, illustrating determinants of vulnerability to climate-related health threats.

The World Health Organization calls climate change a “threat multiplier,” that undermines decades of health progress. In a fact sheet published by the WHO on October 12, 2023, the organization stated:

As climatic conditions change, more frequent and intensifying weather and climate events are observed, including storms, extreme heat, floods, droughts and wildfires. These weather and climate hazards affect health both directly and indirectly, increasing the risk

of deaths, noncommunicable diseases, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, and health emergencies.

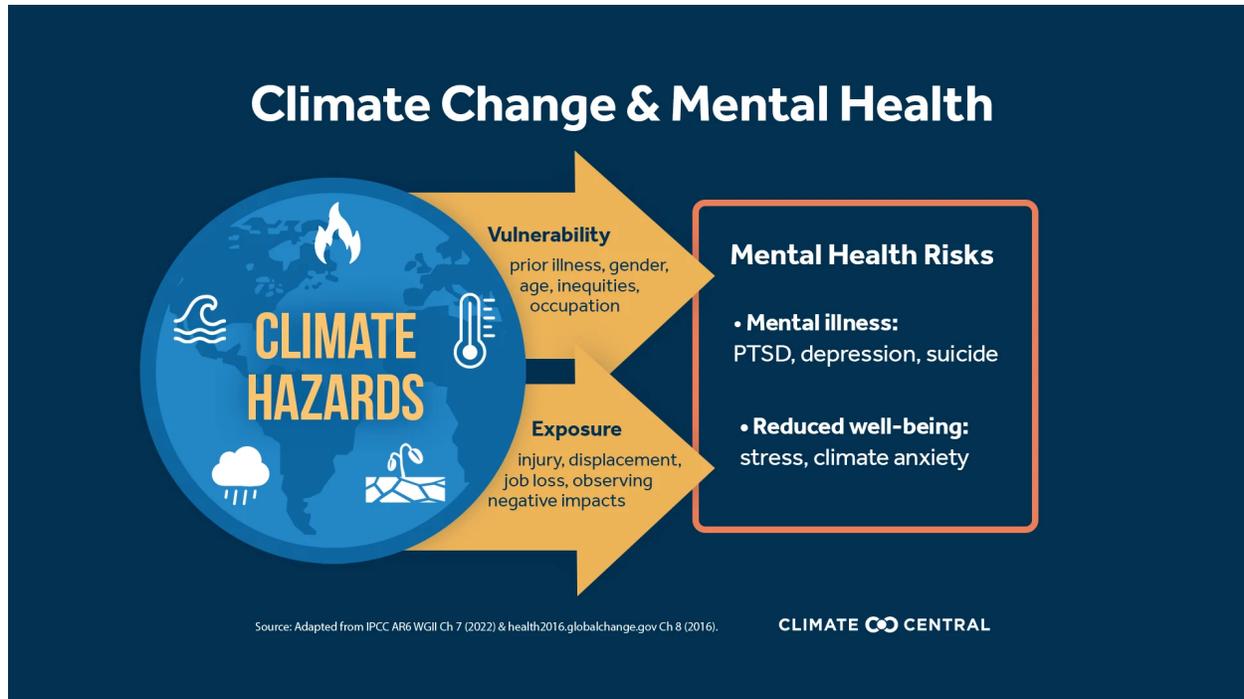
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed the following graphic to highlight the way climate change harms human health through changes in environmental exposures, including more extreme heat and severe weather events, worsened air quality, more frequent wildfires and smoke, increases in allergens, altered environmental conditions that foster the spread of infectious diseases, and other direct and indirect pathways. The resulting human health impacts include increased cases of heat-related illness and death, more air pollution-related cardiovascular and respiratory disease events, increased injury and loss of life due to wildfires, severe storms, and flooding, further occurrences of vector-borne and water-borne illnesses, and mental trauma from loss of livelihoods, property loss, and displacement.



Moreover, populations that already face systemic and economic disadvantages—such as individuals experiencing homelessness, infants and the elderly, pregnant persons, people who manage chronic illnesses, non-able-bodied populations, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and immigrants—are more likely to be adversely impacted by the complex and overlapping consequences of the accelerating climate crisis.

Finally, as the Commonwealth Fund has noted, climate change significantly impacts mental health. In an article entitled “How Climate Change Affects Our Mental Health, and What We Can Do About It,” published on March 29, 2023, the Commonwealth Fund asserted that rising ambient temperatures have already been found to increase rates of mental health-related emergency department visits and that violent incidents and suicide attempts also climb as temperatures rise. Similarly, long-term exposure to air pollution has been associated with elevated anxiety levels and even an increase in suicide rates. Climate change also can raise

stress and anxiety levels for people robbed of their economic livelihoods, as when farmers can no longer grow their crops because of shifting weather patterns that cause frequent drought or flooding. Extreme weather events can also destroy businesses, severely hamper economic activity, and lead to both short- and long-term financial challenges.



Graphic taken from Climate Central, showing the impact of climate change on mental health.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change distinguishes between climate change-related mental health risks that are:

- **Direct:** such as anxiety, depression or PTSD stemming from personal traumas (injury, displacement, or loss of loved ones) sustained during a hurricane;
- **Indirect:** such as stress, substance abuse, or suicidal ideation among individuals whose livelihoods or food security are affected by drought; and
- **Vicarious:** such as anxiety, fear and distress that can affect people when they learn about or perceive climate change risks or witness its harmful impacts on others.

Accordingly, we must recognize the climate crisis as a public health emergency and launch a coordinated response that protects vulnerable communities from its most menacing impacts on our state's health and wellness.

Coalition Earth is a nongovernmental organization that works to preserve the well-being of people and our planet. We champion policies that advance climate resilience, clean energy, public health, and economic fairness for working families. Contact us at info@coalitionearth.org.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 4:16:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Kiefer	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I strongly support SCR111/SR92, a resolution calling for a public health emergency in regards to climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai‘i’s response.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten the physical and mental health of people across Hawai‘i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of “eco-grief” as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the greatest socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a crucial step in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. This declaration directs focus and resources toward vulnerable populations – including keiki, kūpuna, and those living in areas with limited access to healthcare or reliable infrastructure. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. Aligning policies across agencies – from land and water management and urban planning to emergency services – will help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai‘i residents.

The Legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications, building on that foundation by urging every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. In doing so, Hawai‘i can create robust, preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kiefer, MD MPH

Member, Climate Change and Health Working Group

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 10:31:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 9:57:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 9:28:44 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill which acknowledges REALITY: Hawaii has done very well in promoting alternative energy solutions!

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 8:29:01 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SCR 111/SR 92. Climate change is not a distant threat—it is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support SCR 111/SR 92 to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 10:39:06 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alejandra Galarza Gonzalez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees:

My name is ALEJANDRA GALARZA GONZALEZ, and I SUPPORT SCR111/SR92, a resolution calling for a public health emergency regarding climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai‘i’s response.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten people's physical and mental health across Hawai‘i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of “eco-grief” as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the most significant socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is crucial in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. This declaration directs focus and resources toward vulnerable populations – including keiki, kūpuna, and those living in areas with limited access to healthcare or reliable infrastructure. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. Aligning policies across agencies – from land and water management and urban planning to emergency services – will help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai‘i residents.

As a medical professional dedicated to public health, I feel compelled to reiterate the urgent need for action in light of the growing evidence that climate change already affects our community’s health. We are witnessing firsthand the adverse impacts—rising

temperatures are leading to a rise in heat-related illnesses, particularly among our most vulnerable populations. The increase in wildfires threatens our air quality and heightens respiratory conditions, creating a cycle of health crises that we can no longer ignore.

We are beginning to see troubling patterns emerge, with an increase in vector-borne diseases, heightened mental health issues stemming from ecological anxiety, and a surge in emergency room visits during extreme weather events. These are not isolated incidents; they reflect a broader trend already straining our healthcare system and threatening the well-being of our residents.

The resolution calling for a public health emergency is critical in addressing these challenges. By mobilizing resources and fostering a coordinated response, we can begin to mitigate these health impacts and protect our community. We must recognize climate change as an environmental issue and a pressing public health crisis. Our collective action today will determine the health outcomes of future generations.

The legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications. Building on that foundation, it urges every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. In doing so, Hawai'i can create robust, preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction.

Mahalo, thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

Alejandra Galarza Gonzalez

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 8:40:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandra P Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SCR 111/SR 92. Given the current political climate, we can no longer rely on federal agencies to protect our communities against the effects of climate change. As a Hawaii resident, I am particularly concerned about the effects of climate change on health as a consequence of increases in heat-associated diseases, particularly on young children and the elderly, mosquito-borne infectious diseases such as dengue, food security, and mental health. This concurrent resolution will be an important step in assessing Hawaii's statewide plans to strengthen our public health response to this climate crisis and will lead to meaningful actions to improve these plans.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 8:58:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SCR 111/SR 92. Climate change is not a distant threat—it is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support SCR 111/SR 92 to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 1:04:04 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Werner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees:

I SUPPORT SCR111/SR92, a resolution calling for a public health emergency in regards to climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai‘i’s response. My name is Emily Werner, and I am a student at UH Manoa. I am pursuing a bachelor's degree in sustainability, with a focus on sustainable environmental policy and environmental justice, values, and ethics. In addition, I am a member of the Climate Change and Health Working Group.

Through my studies, I have learned severity of the climate crisis and the urgent measures that must be taken in order to protect the environment and the health of our communities.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten the physical and mental health of people across Hawai‘i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of “eco-grief” as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the greatest socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a crucial step in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. This declaration directs focus and resources toward vulnerable populations – including keiki, kūpuna, and those living in areas with limited access to healthcare or reliable infrastructure. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. Aligning policies across agencies – from land and water management and urban

planning to emergency services – will help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai'i residents.

The legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications, building on that foundation by urging every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. In doing so, Hawai'i can create robust, preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

Emily Werner

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 10:42:17 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hye-ryeon Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SCR 111/SR 92. Climate change is not a distant threat—it is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. We have to act now! By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Our and our children's survival and wellbeing depends on our action today. Please support SCR 111/SR 92 to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 10:57:33 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SCR 111/SR 92. Climate change is not a distant threat—it is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support SCR 111/SR 92 to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 3:05:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharde Freitas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sharde Freitas and I SUPPORT SCR111/SR92, a resolution calling for a public health emergency in regards to climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai‘i’s response.

The legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications, and building on that foundation by urging every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. Senate Bill 677 of this legislative session, is another recent example calling for the coordination needed to address the climate change impacts across various facets. By examining health impacts, Hawai‘i can create robust preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction. See also, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes § 226-20, that aligns with the intent of this resolution.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten the physical and mental health of people across Hawai‘i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of “eco-grief” as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the greatest socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a crucial step in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. **Aligning and strategizing policies across agencies – including, but not limited to, health, land and water management, transportation, and planning – will help ensure that climate change adaptation, mitigation, resiliency efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai‘i residents.**

Accordingly, I ask that the committee adopt this resolution. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 7:19:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SCR 111/SR 92.

Climate change is not a distant threat—it is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support SCR 111/SR 92 to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

Suzanne Fields

Haiku, Maui

SCR-111

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 8:00:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/17/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a climate must for Hawai'i. I just found out about it. There are so many bills and the legislative session is so short I feel this inhibits democracy and public involvement.

Please support

Diane Ware Volcano