

# OFFICE OF PLANNING STATE OF HAWAII

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DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
Director, Office of Planning  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**  
Tuesday, March 2, 2021  
11:00 AM  
State Capitol  
in consideration of  
**HB 1092, HD 1**  
**RELATING TO CARBON OFFSETS**

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the House Committee:

The Office of Planning (OP) offers the following **comments** on HB 1092, HD 1. In accordance with [Act 16, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2018](#), the Office of Planning investigated and recently published the "[Feasibility and Implications of Establishing a Carbon Offset Program for the State of Hawai'i](#)" on December 26th, 2019. The publication was electronically provided to the Hawai'i State Legislature and is also available on the Office of Planning's website.

The Office of Planning notes that sections 7.2 (pages 49-51) and 7.4 (pages 52-53) of the feasibility report describe the requirements of developing a potential carbon offset program for the State of Hawai'i.

As explained on page 51 of the feasibility analysis, it is unlikely that the State of Hawai'i would generate significant revenue through the production of offsets, and any trading of offset credits produced within Hawai'i would be limited by the State's Zero Emissions Clean Economy target. Through this publication, the Office of Planning recommended the adoption of alternative fuels in transportation, including sustainable aviation fuels, to reduce Hawai'i's greenhouse gas emissions to meet Hawai'i's Zero Emissions Clean Economy target by 2045.

The U.N. has declared this 2020-2030 decade as the "Decade of Action" to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in alignment with the goals of the U.N. Paris Agreement. These international initiatives have significantly impacted markets and corporations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including [Boeing's recent commitment to transition its commercial aircraft to be ready to fly on 100% sustainable aviation fuels by 2030.](#)

The State of Hawai'i likewise established a strong foundation of greenhouse gas reduction policies through statutory targets to achieve a 100% Renewable Portfolio Standard, and enacting the state's commitment to a Zero Emissions Clean Economy, with both of these targets to be achieved by 2045. Offsets are a specific implementation mechanism used to foster greenhouse gas reductions and, but the uses are narrow. Instead, the State of Hawai'i should build on its existing greenhouse gas reduction policies and programs to develop the most economically viable mechanisms to facilitate reaching the Zero Emissions Clean Economy target by the year 2045.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



TESTIMONY BY:

JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
LYNN A.S. ARAKI-REGAN  
DEREK J. CHOW  
ROSS M. HIGASHI  
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

**LATE**

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 2, 2021  
11:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Via Videoconference

**H.B. 1092, H.D. 1  
RELATING TO CARBON OFFSETS**

House Committee on Finance

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) offers **comments** on this bill which establishes procedures for the DOT to assist and enable a person to voluntarily purchase as verified carbon offset for carbon dioxide emissions from the person's air travel to or from an airport in the State.

The DOT is concerned with the funding source from airport personnel to facilitate and provide process oversight. Utilization of airport personnel to support this service would be a diversion of Airport Revenues and jeopardize Federal Aviation Administration grant assurances.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**HB-1092-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2021 3:13:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2021 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawaii	Comments	No

Comments:

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair,

The Honorable Ty Cullen, Vice Chair, and Members of the

House Committee on Finance

From: Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **HB1092 HD1– RELATING TO CARBON OFFSETS**

Tuesday March 2, 2021, 11:00 a.m., CR 308 and by videoconference

**Position: COMMENT ON HB1092 HD1 RELATING TO CARBON OFFSETS**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Finance Committee:

The Climate Protectors Coalition is a group focused on reversing the climate crisis. As a tropical island State, Hawaii will be among the first places harmed by the global climate crisis, with more intense storms, loss of protective coral reefs, food insecurity, and rising sea levels destroying our shorelines. We must do all we can to reduce our carbon footprint and become carbon negative as soon as possible.

The Climate Protectors Coalition appreciates the intent of HB1092 HD1, but is concerned that carbon offsets can be mere "feel good" greenwashing unless strictly verified. If there is an offset program, it should provide for the offset of 100% of air travel carbon emissions through a combination of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean mobility projects for communities, schools, and nonprofits (with a particular focus on lower-income areas and residents), in combination with terrestrial offsets such as tree planting and sustainable agriculture support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important bill! Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)





To: The House Committee on Finance  
From: Sherry Pollack, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 11am

**In strong opposition to HB1092 HD1**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Finance committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly opposes HB1092 HD1.**

HB1092 HD1 states the legislature finds that climate change is the most pressing issue of our time. 350Hawaii fully agrees. The planet faces an existential climate crisis and we must act now.

This bill also states the legislature recognizes that air travelers are “increasingly aware” of the climate change implications of their travel and seeks to use carbon offsets as an antidote to what some have termed “Flight shaming.” But while carbon offset schemes claim to compensate for emissions with no cost to the climate – they don’t actually do that, they are simply an accounting trick.

According to the UN IPCC report, if we are serious about averting catastrophic planetary changes, we need to reduce emissions by 45 per cent by 2030. Trees planted today can’t grow fast enough to achieve this goal. A newly planted tree can take as many as 20 years to capture the amount of CO2 that a carbon offset scheme promises. And during those decades we have to hope that this tree will survive the droughts, wildfires, and tree diseases that are occurring because of the global warming humans continue to cause by our on-going greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, new research shows that the Earth’s overheated climate will alter forests at a global scale. The study suggests that by 2040 forests will take up only half as much CO2 from the atmosphere as they do now, if global temperatures keep rising at the present pace, and that trees will start to exhale more CO2 than they can take in through photosynthesis.

Bottomline, carbon offsets are a distraction from the real solution to climate change, which is to reduce our carbon emissions. Offsetting simply allows companies like airlines to avoid taking meaningful action on their carbon emissions and to continue with their unsustainable behavior while shifting their responsibility for the climate onto the consumer.

If we’re serious about tackling climate change, there is only one answer to the problem: reducing our emissions. And that will mean moving away from a tourist economy to one that is more diversified and resilient.

Polluting industries have helped to “fuel” the denial that has enabled blocking any meaningful action to confront global warming. As a result, we have lost precious time and are now in the midst of a climate crisis. We cannot afford to waste more time on PR schemes. Our only recourse now is to act swiftly and boldly to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions lest we steal our children’s future. We must continue to do our part to avoid the most devastating impacts of climate change.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack  
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

March 2, 2021, 11:00 A.M.

Video Conference

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1092 HD1

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Committee:

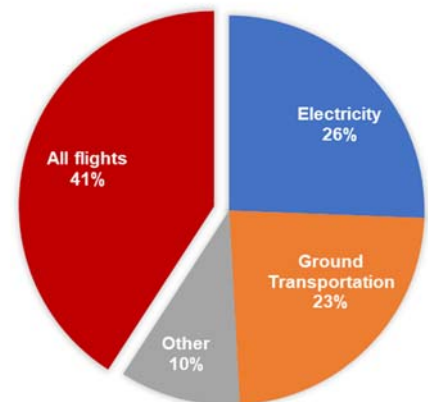
Blue Planet Foundation **supports HB 1092 HD1, establishing a voluntary carbon offset program** for individuals traveling to or from Hawai'i by air. Such a program can help Hawai'i accelerate its carbon reduction goals while low-carbon alternatives for air travel are developed.

Aviation is Hawai'i's largest single source of carbon emissions (when international and round-trip flights are considered), comprising over 40% of the state's overall emissions, as shown in the chart below.<sup>1</sup> Until lower carbon alternatives to jet travel are commercialized, it makes sense to provide an option for travelers to offset their carbon emissions through a verified carbon offset program.

Blue Planet believes that such a Hawai'i-specific program should provide for the offset of 100% of air travel carbon emissions through a combination of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean mobility projects for communities, schools, and nonprofits (with a particular focus on lower-income areas and residents), in combination with terrestrial offsets such as tree planting and sustainable agriculture support.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HAWAI'I'S CARBON EMISSIONS



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<sup>1</sup> Estimate of annual greenhouse gas emissions based on DBEDT Monthly Energy Trend data; EPA's eGrid data; the State of Hawai'i's "Hawaii Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2015"; Hawaiian Airlines 2018 Annual Report; and other sources. Flight emissions include round-trip and international flights.