
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the sea level is
2 rising at increasing rates due to global warming of the
3 atmosphere and oceans and the corresponding melting of glaciers
4 and ice sheets. Due to climate change, Hawaii has experienced
5 over half a foot of sea level rise in recent decades. According
6 to research from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, a large part
7 of the heavily urbanized areas of Honolulu and Waikiki on Oahu
8 are at risk of groundwater inundation—flooding that occurs as
9 groundwater is lifted above the ground surface due to sea level
10 rise. The city and county of Honolulu is expected to begin
11 seeing regular flooding of the urban core in as little as
12 fifteen years.

13 The legislature further finds that, according to the 2018
14 Hawaii Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report, sea
15 level rise, together with projections of stronger and more
16 frequent El Nino events and tropical cyclones in surrounding
17 waters, indicate a growing vulnerability to coastal flooding and



1 erosion for the State. As sea level rise continues accelerating
2 and seas become warmer, the potential impact of a severe
3 disaster grows, and it will be only a matter of time before a
4 significant disaster will impact the State's shoreline
5 communities. A direct hit on urban Honolulu by a major
6 hurricane is estimated to result in a loss of \$40,000,000,000 to
7 the State's infrastructure and economy. The loss of coastal
8 property and infrastructure, increased cost for storm damage and
9 insurance, and loss of life are inevitable if nothing is done,
10 which will add significant burden to local taxpayers, the
11 State's economy, and Hawaii's way of life.

12 The legislature also finds that a comprehensive plan, with
13 input and support from shoreline communities, to protect the
14 State's urban shorelines is likely to take over a decade to
15 develop and implement. New York City only began planning for a
16 comprehensive shoreline protection pilot project to prevent
17 future flooding after the city experienced a \$19,000,000,000
18 loss from storm surge flooding from Hurricane Sandy in 2012. As
19 such, it is urgent and prudent that the State begin planning for
20 shoreline protection from climate change now.



1 Finally, the legislature finds that while many coastal
2 communities are exposed, urban Honolulu's shoreline will be the
3 most challenging to protect. By first establishing a
4 comprehensive shoreline protection pilot project for urban
5 Honolulu and creating a shoreline buffer to reduce the risk and
6 impact of coastal disaster events, this can serve as a model for
7 engaging all neighborhoods in the discussion of protecting
8 communities from climate change, while allowing residents
9 opportunities to expand park space, redevelop the urban
10 landscape, and add amenities to enrich their communities.

11 The purpose of this Act is to establish the Honolulu
12 shoreline climate protection pilot project to require the Hawaii
13 climate change mitigation and adaptation commission to develop a
14 comprehensive plan to protect urban Honolulu and its shoreline
15 from the impacts of climate change, with the goal of using the
16 plan as a model to protect the State's shorelines from coastal
17 disaster events.

18 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the department
19 of land and natural resources for administrative purposes the
20 Honolulu shoreline climate protection pilot project.



1 (b) Under the pilot program, the Hawaii climate change
2 mitigation and adaptation commission shall develop a coastal
3 protection plan for the low-lying topography of urban Honolulu
4 between the Daniel K. Inouye Honolulu International Airport and
5 Diamond Head State Monument. The plan shall designate in the
6 low-lying topography of urban Honolulu different protection
7 compartments. Each protection compartment shall:

8 (1) Provide a physically separate flood-protection zone,
9 isolated from flooding in the other compartments;

10 (2) Provide opportunities for integrated social and
11 community planning processes;

12 (3) Be connected by a continuous shoreline pathway which
13 may be used for emergency access along the length of
14 the shoreline;

15 (4) Be built into shoreline parks and the urban landscape;

16 (5) Be tailored to respond to individual neighborhood
17 topography; and

18 (6) Be capable of self-reliance in the event that the
19 compartment becomes isolated from another due to
20 climate change.



1 (c) The Hawaii climate change mitigation and adaptation
2 commission may partner with the city and county of Honolulu
3 office of climate change and resiliency in the development of
4 the plan required pursuant to subsection (b).

5 (d) The Hawaii climate change mitigation and adaption
6 commission shall submit a report to the legislature on the
7 status of the development of its coastal protection plan
8 pursuant to subsection (b), including any findings,
9 recommendations, and proposed legislation, no later than twenty
10 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2021.

11 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$2,000,000 or so much
13 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for the
14 Honolulu shoreline climate protection pilot project; provided
15 that no funds shall be released unless half the sum appropriated
16 is matched by the city and county of Honolulu.

17 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
18 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020, and
20 shall be repealed on June 30, 2022.



H.B. NO. 1621

INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 10 2020



H.B. NO. 1621

Report Title:

Coastal Disaster Planning; Shoreline Climate Protection Pilot Project; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the Honolulu Shoreline Climate Protection Pilot Project. Requires the Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation Adaptation Commission to develop a comprehensive plan to protect urban Honolulu from the risk of coastal disaster events. Anticipates use of the plan as a model for the State. Appropriates funds. Repeals 6/30/2022.

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