
SENATE RESOLUTION

REAFFIRMING THE STATE'S COMMITMENT TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND
PRIORITIZE CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION.

1 WHEREAS, in the State adopted, Act 32, Session Laws of
2 Hawaii 2017, which committed to complying with the Paris Climate
3 Agreement, and enacted and codified section 225P-5, Hawaii
4 Revised Statutes, in 2018 to reach a zero-emissions clean
5 economy by 2045; and
6

7 WHEREAS, coastal erosion threatens nearly every beach in
8 Hawaii and has caused more than thirteen miles of shoreline to
9 be lost throughout the islands; and
10

11 WHEREAS, the State's Sea Level Rise Adaptation
12 Vulnerability Report estimates that the sea level will rise by
13 three feet as early as 2060 and cause at least \$19,000,000,000
14 in damage by the end of the century; and
15

16 WHEREAS, the sediment released from erosion also decreases
17 ocean water quality and causes ocean acidification, both of
18 which are harmful to local reefs; and
19

20 WHEREAS, in 2019, petroleum-fired energy accounted for
21 approximately 70.4 percent of Hawaii's net electricity
22 generation (6,864 MWh) while forms of renewable energy, such as
23 conventional hydroelectric, all utility-scale solar, wind,
24 geothermal, and biomass, accounted for only 12.14 percent of the
25 State's net electricity generation; and
26

27 WHEREAS, section 269-92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, requires
28 each electrical utility company that sells electricity for
29 consumption in the State to establish a renewable portfolio
30 standard of one hundred percent of its net electricity sales by
31 December 31, 2045; and
32

33 WHEREAS, professors at Cornell University affirm that
34 environmental education is an essential element of the global



1 response to climate change and climate literacy promotes
2 students rethinking their attitudes and decisions; and

3
4 WHEREAS, the State is particularly vulnerable to natural
5 disaster exacerbated by climate change through wildfires or
6 major storms, and students in the State would especially benefit
7 from environmental education to foster community and socio-
8 ecological resilience; and

9
10 WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources is
11 responsible for managing the State's coastal waters, beaches,
12 state parks, and public lands, including seven hundred fifty
13 miles of coastline, 1,300,000 acres of state lands, and fifty-
14 two state parks; and

15
16 WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources is
17 the agency tasked with caring for the State's plant and wildlife
18 sanctuaries, conservation districts, watershed protection,
19 natural area reserves, and protecting native resources,
20 including the preservation of endangered species and unique
21 ecosystems; and

22
23 WHEREAS, in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Department of
24 Land and Natural Resources was budgeted \$157,867,887 in the
25 final approved Statewide Supplemental Operating Budget out of a
26 final approved statewide total of \$15,672,211,865, constituting
27 only 1.0 percent of the Statewide Supplemental Operating Budget;
28 and

29
30 WHEREAS, the State recently adopted Act 45, Session Laws of
31 Hawaii 2020, which established a Statewide Sustainability Branch
32 within the Office of Planning to develop, organize, and promote
33 policies and programs that assist in the meeting of Hawaii's
34 numerous sustainability and climate policies and goals, in
35 addition to updating and reaffirming the role of the Office of
36 Planning to coordinate among state agencies regarding climate
37 change adaptation, sea level rise adaptation, and
38 sustainability; and

39
40 WHEREAS, section 226-109, Hawaii Revised Statutes,
41 established climate change adaptation priority guidelines to
42 prepare the State for addressing the impacts of climate change,



1 including impacts to the areas of agriculture, conservation
2 lands, coastal and nearshore marine areas, natural and cultural
3 resources, education, energy, higher education, health, historic
4 preservation, water resources, housing, recreation,
5 transportation, and the economy; and
6

7 WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu's Office of
8 Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resilience plays a critical
9 role in Hawaii's response to climate change by monitoring the
10 evolution of climate science, coordinating the response and
11 policies within the City and County of Honolulu, integrating
12 sustainable and environmental values into legislation, and
13 prioritizing community preparedness; and
14

15 WHEREAS, ecological restoration projects in support of the
16 recovery of damaged or destroyed ecosystems is extremely
17 valuable in mitigating the negative effects of climate change,
18 by enhancing the extent and functioning of carbon sinks and
19 reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and
20

21 WHEREAS, most ecological restoration projects are community
22 efforts. For example, Hui o Koolaupoko works with volunteers at
23 the Heeia Estuary to remove invasive species, which filters
24 stormwater runoff, fosters native species growth, and aids in
25 erosion control; and
26

27 WHEREAS, forty governments worldwide have already
28 implemented some form of carbon emission regulation, through
29 either a direct carbon tax or a cap-and-trade program, which
30 results in a drastic reduction in coal use and carbon emissions,
31 a necessary step in combating climate change. For example,
32 Sweden introduced an extensive carbon tax in 1995, which has
33 since shrunk their carbon emissions by twenty-five percent,
34 while growing their economy by seventy-five percent; and
35

36 WHEREAS, economists from across the political spectrum
37 almost universally support a tax on carbon emissions, as it can
38 stimulate a country's economy and create an incentive to invest
39 in the green energy industry; now, therefore,
40

41 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
42 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,



1 that this body reaffirms Hawaii's commitment to combating
2 climate change and prioritizing climate change legislation; and
3

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body is urged to commit to
5 focusing on climate change legislation that reduces greenhouse
6 gas emissions as laid out in the framework of the 2016 Paris
7 Climate Accord; and
8

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is requested to
10 continue its commitment to set ambitious goals for carbon
11 sequestration, decrease of greenhouse gas emissions, and
12 decrease of the State's dependence on imported fuels; and
13

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State must persist in its
15 mission to reach a zero-emissions clean economy and use
16 renewable sources to obtain a renewable portfolio standard of
17 one hundred percent of net electricity sales statewide by 2045
18 and prioritize the establishment of a green energy industry
19 within the islands by supporting renewable sources of energy and
20 green initiatives; and
21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is requested to
23 commit to considering the scope and importance of the Department
24 of Land and Natural Resources' mission when determining future
25 statewide supplemental operating budgets to ensure the
26 Department is capable of protecting and preserving the flora and
27 fauna under its jurisdiction, which is a critical component of
28 Hawaii's response to climate change; and
29

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is further requested
31 to recognize the importance of raising awareness about the
32 climate crisis and advocating for climate literacy and will
33 promote youth climate literacy and increased public awareness;
34 and
35

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is urged to continue
37 to support ecological restoration projects to integrate
38 government and community level efforts to restore native plants
39 and animals to their local habitats and the positive impacts
40 these projects can have in regard to climate change; and
41



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the
3 Board of Land and Natural Resources, and Director of the Office
4 of Planning.

