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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO A DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, unlike most states,  
2 Hawaii has no executive-level department dedicated to the  
3 mission of environmental protection and implementing the  
4 environmental policy goals enacted by the legislature. Instead,  
5 these functions are dispersed among multiple departments having  
6 differing missions that either do not focus on the importance of  
7 environmental protection or have internal conflicts.

8           The legislature further finds that because the ongoing  
9 climate crisis is one of the overarching issues of modern times,  
10 the protection of the State's environment and natural resources  
11 is more critical than ever. Although almost all issues are  
12 multi-jurisdictional, the legislature believes that creating an  
13 executive-level department to unite this important work under  
14 one administrative umbrella will lead to greater efficiency in  
15 addressing Hawaii's environmental issues in a timely and  
16 proactive fashion.

17           The purpose of this Act is to:



1 (1) Establish a firm deadline by which a department of  
2 environmental protection, to be headed by a board of  
3 environmental protection, shall be created; and

4 (2) Create a department of environmental protection  
5 working group to address the logistics of fulfilling  
6 this mandate.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 26, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended  
8 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to  
9 read as follows:

10 "§26- Department of environmental protection. (a) The  
11 department of environmental protection shall be headed by an  
12 executive board to be known as the board of environmental  
13 protection, to provide oversight to the department of  
14 environmental protection.

15 (b) The board shall consist of seven members. The  
16 appointment, tenure, and removal of the members and filling of  
17 vacancies on the board shall be as provided in section 26-34.  
18 The governor shall appoint members from a list of nominees as  
19 follows:

20 (1) One member to be nominated by the governor;





- 1 (6) Department of taxation (Section 26-10)
- 2 (7) University of Hawaii (Section 26-11)
- 3 (8) Department of education (Section 26-12)
- 4 (9) Department of health (Section 26-13)
- 5 (10) Department of human services (Section 26-14)
- 6 (11) Department of land and natural resources (Section
- 7 26-15)
- 8 (12) Department of agriculture (Section 26-16)
- 9 (13) Department of Hawaiian home lands (Section 26-17)
- 10 (14) Department of business, economic development, and
- 11 tourism (Section 26-18)
- 12 (15) Department of transportation (Section 26-19)
- 13 (16) Department of labor and industrial relations (Section
- 14 26-20)
- 15 (17) Department of defense (Section 26-21)
- 16 (18) Department of public safety (Section 26-14.6) [-]
- 17 (19) Department of environmental protection (Section
- 18 26-\_\_\_\_\_)."

19 SECTION 4. (a) There is established a department of  
 20 environmental protection working group.



1 (b) The working group shall address the logistics required  
2 for the State to establish a department of environmental  
3 protection by July 1, 2026, including but not limited to  
4 developing:

5 (1) An organizational and functional plan, including  
6 recommendations on the implementation, structure, and  
7 funding for the department; and

8 (2) A plan for the orderly transition and transfer of  
9 existing departmental functions, authority, records,  
10 and resources necessary for the establishment of the  
11 department.

12 (c) The working group shall consist of the following  
13 individuals:

14 (1) The chief energy officer, or the chief energy  
15 officer's designee;

16 (2) The chairperson of the board of land and natural  
17 resources, or the chairperson's designee;

18 (3) The director of the office of planning and sustainable  
19 development, or the director's designee;

20 (4) A representative of the office of the governor;



1 (5) The attorney general, or the attorney general's  
2 designee; and

3 (6) The director of health, or the director's designee.

4 (d) The working group shall prepare and submit a report of  
5 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
6 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior  
7 to the convening of the regular session of 2025.

8 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
9 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

10 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;  
11 provided that sections 2 and 3 shall take effect on July 1,  
12 2026.



**Report Title:**

Working Group; Department of Environmental Protection; Board of Environmental Protection; Recommendations

**Description:**

Establishes a Department of Environmental Protection, to be headed by a Board of Environmental Protection, by July 1, 2026. Creates a Department of Environmental Protection working group to address the logistics required for the State to establish a Department of Environmental Protection. Requires the working group to submit a report to the Legislature prior to the 2025 Regular Session. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

