



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By  
Charles "Chip" Fletcher, PhD  
Interim Dean  
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology  
And  
Michael Bruno, PhD  
Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### SB 657 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

**The University of Hawai'i School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) strongly supports Senate Bill 657 SD1 HD1**, which appropriates funds for SOEST to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development.

The proposal set forth in Senate Bill 657 to create a Center for Climate Resilient Development at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa represents a crucial step in safeguarding the future of Hawai'i.

Building on the SOEST's proven expertise in climate modeling, the Center will provide actionable data on sea level rise, coastal erosion, wave flooding, groundwater inundation, storm water drainage, and more—already indispensable to Hawai'i's real estate, environmental review, and county resilience laws. Further, laws that refer to the Sea Level Rise Exposure Area include the clause "or its successor," contemplating updates to SOEST's modeling products that cannot be completed without adequate resources.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a list of laws and policies that depend on SOEST data.

- Mandatory disclosure of sea level rise in real estate transactions
  - Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 508D-15(5)
- Required analysis of sea level rise in the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act
  - Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 343
  - Hawai'i Administrative Rules §§ 11-200.1-13, -18, -21, -24
- Shoreline Setback Ordinances in Kaua'i County, Maui County, and the City & County of Honolulu
  - Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 205A-45
  - Maui County Administrative Rules, Title 12 Chapter 203
  - Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, Chapter 26
  - Kaua'i County Code, Title IV, Chapter 8, Article 27

---

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Haw. Rev. Stat. § 508D-15(a)(5).

- Special Management Area in Maui County and the City & County of Honolulu
  - Hawai'i Revised Statutes §§ 205A-21 et seq.
  - Maui County Administrative Rules, Title 12 Chapter 202
  - Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, Chapter 25
- Kaua'i County Sea Level Rise Constraint District
  - Kaua'i County Code, Title IV, Chapter 8, Article 12.5

In 2017, the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission formally adopted the Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation report based on SOEST research.<sup>2</sup> Since then, SOEST data and modeling have been utilized in many state and local reports and plans. City and County of Honolulu and Maui County Mayors have also issued proclamations requiring their respective departments to incorporate sea level rise considerations into their planning and decision making.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, research at SOEST relies heavily on unstable federal grants, putting this vital work at risk without consistent funding. Recently, the Trump Administration implemented a pause on all federal grants, indicating a concerning trend for an administration that has shown limited interest in funding climate change-related research. SOEST research currently receives grant funding from the Department of Defense which cut \$580 million in spending last week<sup>4</sup> and the Defense Secretary has "pledged to slash many environmental programs and prohibit military officials from discussing climate change."<sup>5</sup>

While Senate Bill 657 SD1 HD1 requests a one-time appropriation for this legislative session, SOEST advocates for an ongoing funding mechanism.

With \$3 million annually, the Center will solidify Hawai'i's capacity to address evolving climate hazards, collaborate with communities statewide, and champion equitable, sustainable development to protect the islands' people, ecosystems, and future.

The utilization of general fund dollars for climate and sea level rise research offers significant long-term cost savings. While the initial investment may seem substantial, it pales in comparison to the future expenses that the state will inevitably face if it fails to adequately prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Investing in research now allows for the development of data-driven strategies to mitigate these impacts, protecting critical infrastructure and minimizing damage from severe weather events. Every dollar spent proactively on research can save the state significantly more in the form of avoided future infrastructure repairs, emergency services costs, and the immeasurable cost of human suffering during climate-related disasters. This proactive approach is not only fiscally responsible but also demonstrates a commitment to the safety and well-being of Hawai'i's residents.

---

<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. 2017. Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report. Prepared by Tetra Tech, Inc. and the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, under the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources Contract No: 64064.

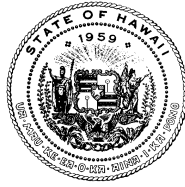
<sup>3</sup> Off. of the Mayor, City and Cty. of Honolulu, Exec. Directive No. 18-2 (Jul. 16, 2018); Off. of the Mayor, Cty. of Mau Honolulu, Exec. Proclamation (Feb. 22, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Olay, *DOD to Cut \$580 Million in Spending*, DOD NEWS (Mar. 20, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Kevin Knodell, *Trump's Pentagon seeks spending on Pacific forces, cuts to environmental and cultural programs*, STAR ADVERTISER (Mar. 23, 2025).

In conclusion, passing SB 657 SD1 HD1 and funding climate and sea level rise research at SOEST, whether through general fund, or through some other means, is a strategic investment in the state's future. This vital research will help to protect the natural beauty that attracts tourists and generates significant revenue, while also mitigating future costs associated with climate change impacts. This investment is not merely an expenditure, but a crucial step towards ensuring Hawai'i's environmental, economic, and social resilience in the face of an increasingly uncertain future.

We urge your passage of SB 657 SD1 HD1, provided its adoption does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. BOX 3378  
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378

WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0657  
RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT.**

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: 3/27/2025

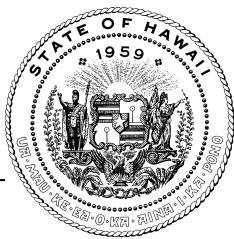
Room Number: 415

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure will impact the priorities identified in the Governor's  
2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and  
3 personnel priorities.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department supports bill SB0657 and recognizes that the  
5 changing climate is a worldwide environmental health problem that directly impacts the health  
6 and safety of Hawaii's people, communities, and natural environment. Potential human health  
7 effects resulting from climate change are broad reaching and include dangers from increased  
8 natural disasters and flooding, changing vector-borne infectious diseases and food related  
9 infections, as well as impacts on mental health and well-being. Hawaii has been a national leader  
10 in taking steps to increase resilience and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.  
11 However, much of these efforts have been directed at planning and infrastructure and have not  
12 focused on preventing the negative impacts of climate change on the community.

13  
14 The need to build out further capacity throughout Hawai'i to address climate change impact to  
15 the environment and community resiliency is of the utmost importance. SOEST has been an  
16 integral partner to the Department for providing modeling on flooding projections, heat  
17 projections, hurricane storm surge and various others that are utilized for data to action. The

- 1 creation of a center that provides education for the community and recommendations for projects
- 2 would bolster the state's efforts to further protect the community from climate change hazards.
- 3
- 4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846  
Fax: (808) 587-2824  
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**  
Thursday, March 27, 2025, 2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of  
**SB 657 SD 1 HD1**  
**RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT.**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The purpose of SB 657 SD 1 HD 1 is to appropriate funds for the University of Hawai'i, School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development which will provide climate data and modeling on coastal hazards such as sea level rise, coastal erosion and groundwater inundation.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** this bill, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact administrative budget priorities, as the availability of up-to-date and reliable information is a critical component to ensure that decision making along the shoreline is informed by science. Building on SOEST's proven expertise in climate modeling, the Center will provide actionable data on sea level rise, coastal erosion, wave flooding, groundwater inundation, and more—already indispensable to Hawai'i's real estate, environmental review, and county resilience laws. With dedicated funding, the Center will be able to provide foundational data for planning and managing our coastal areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION  
COMMISSION  
POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809**

**Testimony of  
LEAH LARAMEE  
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of  
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Co-Chair Mary Alice Evans and  
Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang**

**Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE**

**Thursday, March 27, 2025  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 657, SD 1, HD 1  
RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT**

Senate Bill 657, SD1, HD1, appropriates funds for the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology within the University of Hawai'i at Manoa to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development.

The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request. The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 state departments, legislative committees, and counties.

The Commission works closely with the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) and uses their sea level rise data and coastal erosion modeling to develop the 2017 and 2022 State Sea Level Rise and Adaptation Reports, as well as the resulting policies.

With federal funding uncertain for work in the field of climate change, stable state funding is needed. The state must continue to invest in climate science and sea level rise modeling to ensure there is scientifically based data to guide decision making in coastal development.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.





JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE

Thursday, March 27, 2025  
2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 657, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

Senate Bill 657, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds for the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology within the University of Hawai'i to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill.**

The Department has a close working relationship with the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) and has used the sea level rise data and coastal erosion modeling to help develop the 2017 and 2022 State Sea Level Rise and Adaptation Reports as well as the resulting policies.

The work conducted at SOEST has largely been funded by federal grants, which can be subject to the influence of changing national priorities. Climate science and sea level rise modeling continue to advance. If the State wishes to continue to base its policies on science, the Department believes that we should invest directly in the development and support of scientific resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

*KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA*

**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11<sup>th</sup> FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: [resilientoahu@honolulu.gov](mailto:resilientoahu@honolulu.gov) • INTERNET: [www.resilientoahu.org](http://www.resilientoahu.org)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
*MEIA*



BENJAMIN SULLIVAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &  
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER  
*PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA*

KEALOHA FOX  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR &  
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER  
*HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA*

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025, 2:00 P.M.

STATE OF HAWAII  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 657, SD1, HD1  
RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT**

BY,

KEALOHA FOX, Ph.D.  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER  
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** SB657, SD1, HD1, which appropriates funds for the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development.

The City has greatly benefited from the research, data, and modeling produced by SOEST, including those utilized in the City's recent update to shoreline setback and special management area regulations to better safeguard beaches and adjacent development in the face of increasing climate change impacts, including sea level rise and coastal erosion. Additionally, the City relies upon SOEST's partnership, data, and modeling in planning efforts to increase the climate resiliency of infrastructure in Waikīkī and Iwilei, as well as lower climate hazard risk for communities in the Ko'olaupoko region. Climate impacts will continue to increase, and SOEST remains a critical partner and resource in our ability to plan for and address these impacts on our communities. Secure investment in these scientific resources will be necessary to effectively do so into the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB657, SD1, HD1.



Email: [communications@uluPono.com](mailto:communications@uluPono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Thursday, March 27, 2025 — 2:00 p.m.

**UluPono Initiative supports SB 657 SD 1 HD 1, Relating to Center for Climate Resilient Development.**

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at UluPono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**UluPono supports SB 657 SD 1 HD 1**, which appropriates funds for the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) within the University of Hawai'i at Manoa to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development.

Hawai'i faces unique and pressing challenges from climate change that require coordinated, science-based solutions. The proposed Center would fill a considerable gap by providing dedicated capacity for community-focused climate resilience planning.

SOEST is ideally positioned to house this Center, given its established expertise in climate modeling and track record of working directly with communities. Its existing modeling capabilities are already essential to the state's climate adaptation efforts, including:

- Mandatory sea level rise disclosure requirements for real estate transactions
- Environmental review processes
- County-level shoreline setback and special management area regulations

However, this vital research currently relies on vulnerable soft money funding. By providing stable state funding of \$3 million annually, this bill would protect and enhance Hawai'i's climate science capabilities at a time when federal support for climate research faces uncertainty.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



#### Officers

Kaipo Kekona  
State President

Anabella Bruch  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

#### Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber  
Kohala, Hawai'i

Tony Vera  
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta  
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahālāwai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy  
Moloka'i

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

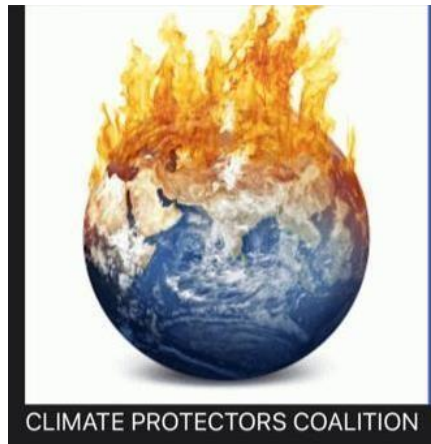
The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports SB657.**

Investing in the establishment of a Center for Climate Resilient Development at the University of Hawaii is a significant advancement for addressing the pressing challenges faced by Hawaii's agricultural community due to climate change. This initiative is not only essential for the present circumstances but is crucial for preparing our state's farmers for an unpredictable future. By focusing on resilience, the Center can develop innovative strategies and provide the necessary tools and resources to farmers, empowering them to adapt to diverse climate conditions and mitigate the adverse effects of climate events on their livelihoods.

Hawaii's unique ecosystem and geographical conditions demand tailored solutions in agriculture, which the Center could facilitate through dedicated research and collaborations. The Center will foster partnerships between scientists, policymakers, and farmers to develop informed, science-based practices that enhance productivity while prioritizing environmental stewardship. By integrating local wisdom with cutting-edge research, this initiative will ensure that agricultural practices remain sustainable and economically viable, ultimately strengthening Hawaii's food security and contributing positively to the broader global efforts in combating climate change. This integrated approach will equip our farmers with the resilience needed to thrive in the face of impending climatic shifts.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



---

To: The Honorable Chair Kyle Yamashita, the Honorable Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

From: The Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **SB657 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT**

Hearing: Thursday March 27, 2025, 2:00 p.m. Rm. 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance!

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i seeks to educate and engage the local community in climate change action.

**The Climate Protectors Hawai'i STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB657 SD1 HD1!**

Hawai'i is extremely vulnerable to hazards from climate warming, but no single agency or entity is responsible for developing climate resiliency plans.

The University of Hawai'i School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) has been working with communities to identify some of those vulnerabilities: flooding from hurricanes and sea level rise, heat projections, and wildfires, with expertise in ignition modeling. SOEST has developed modeling for the State's mandatory disclosure of sea level rise in real estate transactions and for environmental reviews. **Contracts and federal money that SOEST has used are likely to be unavailable in the next few years. Based on its experience, SOEST would appear to be the best single entity in Hawai'i to develop climate resiliency plans.**

This bill would establish a Center for Climate Resilient Development in UH SOEST. This Center would **provide communities with guidance on climate hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities and recommend capital improvement projects and shovel-ready projects to build resiliency.**

Climate Protectors Hawai'i is very concerned that Hawai'i **minimize the future costs** of adapting for climate warming hazards and vulnerabilities. **Hawai'i can avoid a great deal of higher future costs of climate change by careful planning. It makes sense to have a single entity responsible for developing climate resiliency plans.** Based on its experience, **SOEST** would appear to be the **best single entity in Hawai'i to develop climate resiliency plans.**

**Please pass this bill to establish a Center for Climate Resilient Development in UH SOEST.**

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

MARCH 27, 2025

### SB 657, SD1, HD1, RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

#### POSITION: SUPPORT

Coalition Earth **supports** SB 657, SD1, HD1, relating to the Center for Climate Resilient Development, which appropriates funds for the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology within the University of Hawai'i at Manoa to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development.

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 accelerate our transition to a clean energy economy and continue our fight against climate change, including by uplifting strategies to reduce direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions, support sustainable development with an emphasis on social equity for all communities, and augment socioeconomic systems to bolster climate resilience and public health.** Under the Trump administration, funding for climate resilience initiatives will likely be severely curtailed, leaving it to state officials to guarantee that our efforts to combat climate change can continue unabated.

Experts at the University of Hawai'i's School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) work with communities to identify sea level rise vulnerabilities, hurricane storm surge models, heat projections, and wildfire hazards. SOEST's sea level rise models are utilized for the mandatory disclosure of sea level rise in real estate transactions and the analysis of sea level rise required by the state's environmental review process. SOEST's climate researchers also perform invaluable analyses of the impact of climate change on our state, as the worst effects of the climate crisis become more likely with each passing year.

As we invest more heavily in green infrastructure, climate readiness, emergency preparedness, and clean energy, it would be beneficial to have a research center to inform public policy and partner with individual communities on projects that address climate change. This is particularly true in light of the need to craft a socially equitable response to the climate emergency, in which our most marginalized populations—who are also those most susceptible to climate threats—are fully included.

*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](mailto:info@coalitionearth.org).***



**SB-657-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 3:45:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

**SB-657-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 10:21:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chanara Caey Richmond	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB657. Chanara Richmond. HD42

**SB-657-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 11:10:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Kioni Dudley	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair and Finance Committee Members,

I am Dr. Kioni Dudley. I created a one-hour video titled “The New Hurricane Theat to Hawaii,” which showed 10 times on all local TV stations In September.

I strongly support Senate Bill 657. While SOEST has been primarily concerned with Ocean related problems, this would give them the opportunity to give much more focus to hurricane mitigation. The Center for Climate Resilient Development that it would create at UHManoa would increase the classes in climate change mitigation and resilience, making our younger generations much more aware of the problems, and preparing them to take on solutions.

I ask you to pass this bill.

Aloha, Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Chip Fletcher, I am the Interim Dean of the University of Hawai'i School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology, "SOEST," and I am submitting this written testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 657**.

The following is intended as an addendum to the official testimony submitted by the University and is provided to give your House Committee on Finance additional information to support our request for maximum transparency.

The requested \$3 million would go to support salaries for researchers at SOEST:

- **Four PhD level scientists;**
- **Five master's degree level researchers;**
- **Six graduate student researchers; and**
- **One administrator.**

I (Chip) come at no cost to the project. Please find a full budget breakdown on the following three pages.

**For a single year, our salaries (+ fringe) alone without university overhead, travel costs, or any other supplies total \$1,841,884.**

**Including the 45.5 percent overhead cost that the University charges, a single year of our operation without travel or any other supplies total \$2,679,941.**

Each one of these young scientists is either from Hawai'i, or has made their home in Hawai'i, and are working for the betterment of life in Hawai'i. This is purposely a highly diverse group consisting dominantly of women, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Hawai'i-born scientists, and all of them are working to make their permanent lives in Hawai'i as scientists.

As it stands, our research is entirely reliant on federal grant funding, and as you lawmakers well know, the new administration is using its best efforts to stop funding and even claw back money allocated for climate research.

We are not asking for a one-time supplement. We are asking that this highly applied science be supported by state funds perennially. In exchange we are highly responsive to requests from state and county agencies, NGO's, consultants, and other groups focusing on climate adaptation. We will happily submit an annual report to the legislature, and provide an annual climate change briefing of the latest information relevant to Hawaii.

We sincerely appreciate your House Committee on Finance considering this measure and are available for any questions.

Very Respectfully,

*C. Fletcher*

**CUMULATIVE**

XXXXXXXXXX	- Assistant Researcher	Salary 8,240	Months 12.0	98,880	98,880
				98,880	98,880
		Total Senior Personnel		98,880	98,880
		Salary	Months		
XXXXXXXXXX	- Graduate Assistant	2,955	12.0	35,460	35,460
XXXXXXXXXX	- Overload	3,224	3.0	9,672	9,672
XXXXXXXXXX	- Research Specialist	9,329	12.0	111,948	111,948
XXXXXXXXXX	Geospatial Anlyst Mgr	12,226	12.0	146,712	146,712
XXXXXXXXXX	- Oper Proj Mgr	12,226	12.0	146,712	146,712
XXXXXXXXXX	- Research Coastal Geologist	12,408	12.0	148,896	148,896
XXXXXXXXXX	- Geospatial Analyst	6,792	12.0	81,504	81,504
XXXXXXXXXX	Graduate Assistant	2,955	12.0	35,460	35,460
XXXXXXXXXX	- Overload	3,224	3.0	9,672	9,672
XXXXXXXXXX	Clim Change & Res Pol Anlyst	8,051	12.0	96,612	96,612
XXXXXXXXXX	- Graduate Assistant	2,955	12.0	35,460	35,460
XXXXXXXXXX	- Overload	3,224	3.0	9,672	9,672
XXXXXXXXXX	- Geospat Modeling Anlyst	6,792	12.0	81,504	81,504
XXXXXXXXXX	Graduate Assistant	2,955	12.0	35,460	35,460
XXXXXXXXXX	- Overload	3,224	3.0	9,672	9,672
XXXXXXXXXX	r, Noah - Graduate Assistant	2,955	12.0	35,460	35,460
XXXXXXXXXX	Noah - Overload	3,224	3.0	9,672	9,672
XXXXXXXXXX	- Graduate Assistant	2,955	12.0	35,460	35,460
XXXXXXXXXX	- Overload	3,224	3.0	9,672	9,672
XXXXXXXXXX	- Administrative Officer	6,033	12.0	72,396	72,396
XXXXXXXXXX	- SOEST Climate Modeling Anlyst	7,256	12.0	87,072	87,072
		Total Personnel		1,244,148	1,244,148
		Total Salaries & Wages		1,343,028	1,343,028
XXXXXXXXXX	- Assistant Researcher			62,759	62,759

		0	0
	- Graduate Assistant	4,695	4,695
	- Overload	157	157
	- Research Specialist	39,674	39,674
	- Geospatial Anlyst Mgr	51,995	51,995
	- Oper Proj Mgr	51,995	51,995
	- Research Coastal Geologist	94,504	94,504
	- Geospatial Analyst	28,885	28,885
	- Graduate Assistant	4,695	4,695
	- Overload	157	157
	- Clim Change & Res Pol Anlyst	34,239	34,239
	- Graduate Assistant	4,695	4,695
	- Overload	157	157
	- Geospat Modeling Anlyst	28,885	28,885
	- Graduate Assistant	4,695	4,695
	- Overload	157	157
	- Graduate Assistant	4,695	4,695
	- Overload	157	157
	- Graduate Assistant	4,695	4,695
	- Overload	157	157
	- Administrative Officer	45,950	45,950
	- SOEST Climate Modeling Anlyst	30,858	30,858

**Total Fringe Benefits**

**498,856**

**498,856**

**Total Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits**

**1,841,884**

**1,841,884**

Domestic Travel

0

0

International Travel

0

0

**Total Travel Cost**

0

0

0

0

0

0

0

0

	<b>Other Direct Cost</b>	0	0
	<b>Total Direct Cost</b>	<b>1,841,884</b>	<b>1,841,884</b>
Indirect Cost Base		1,841,884	1,841,884
Indirect Cost (45.5% of MTDC)		838,057	838,057
	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>2,679,941</b>	<b>2,679,941</b>