

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

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

**Senate Committee on Water and Land**

Monday, March 17, 2025

1:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

**With Support**

**S.C.R No. 51 / S.R. No. 33, Relating to a Working Group for an Office of Resilience and Recovery**

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land:

The Office of the Governor Recovery and Resiliency Unit supports S.C.R No. 51 and S.R. No. 33, Relating to a Working Group for an Office of Resilience and Recovery.

Recent large disasters and a dynamic and changing climate environment have reinforced the need for long-term recovery and resiliency coordination. In the years following the 2018 Disasters (flooding, lava, tropical systems), COVID-19 Disaster, 2021 Flooding (spring and winter), and the 2023 Wildfires, the losses and impacts to life, homes, property, infrastructure, businesses, and natural and cultural resources should compel the State of Hawai'i to plan effectively for recovery and expand our capacity and capability in resiliency.

To further strengthen this collaborative effort, we offer a proposed amendment to the language in the resolution on page 3, lines 11 - 15, recommending that county representatives include their lead for recovery and resiliency. This will ensure that recovery and resiliency collaboration is fully integrated across all levels. Furthermore, we suggest that the working group on page 2, should remain focused on its core purpose - with intent on recovery and resiliency. With support that OPSD lead this effort, there should be appropriate resources to coordinate these activities.

The Office of Recovery and Resiliency, HI-ORR, a temporary office attached to the Office of Governor is dedicated and committed to providing comprehensive support to the people of Hawai'i in the aftermath of disasters, as well as helping them becoming prepared before disaster strikes. HI-ORR recognizes that an all-hands approach in helping impacted communities and that no one agency's program can enable a community to fully recover.

Testimony of Office of the Governor  
S.C.R No. 51 and S.R. No. 33  
March 17, 2025  
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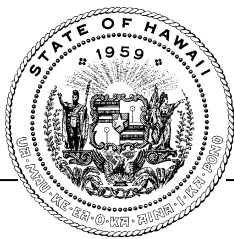
There is tremendous value in a permanent office that is dedicated to the community, businesses, and to our state of Hawai'i to ensure proper recovery and resiliency.

HI-ORR is involved with multiple efforts with many partners supporting the Maui Wildfires including: Administering the Hawai'i Housing Interim Program (HIHP); Tracking Long-term Recovery Projects and Fiscal investments; Coordinating a State Permitting Workgroup; and Producing a State capabilities Assessment and a State Recovery Strategy. HI-ORR also has the responsibility of maintaining and updating the State Recovery Operations Plan. This work and related insights support the groundwork for long-term recovery and resiliency by providing stability to the State for future incidents.

The proposed S.C.R. 51/ S.R. 33 is a critical step toward building more resilient communities – before, during, and after a disaster. We have a collective responsibility to support one another, and this resolution represents meaningful progress towards that goal.

If you have any questions on this testimony please contact Luke Meyers, Branch Chief HI-ORR and State Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Maui Wildfires for further information and a dialog on this proposal during the legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this resolution.



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
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, Hawai'i 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

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

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

**LATE**

Monday, March 17, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of  
**SCR51**

**REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE ESTABLISHMENT AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE PLACEMENT OF AN OFFICE OF RESILIENCE AND  
RECOVERY.**

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante and Members of the Committee.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** and **offers amendments** to SCR51, which requests OPSD to convene a working group to evaluate the establishment and administrative placement of an Office of Resilience and Recovery.

The challenges experienced since the Maui wildfires in August 2023, and increasing frequency and intensity of disasters due to climate change, clearly demonstrate the urgent need to strengthen the State's resilience and preparedness for future disasters. Establishing a permanent Office of Resilience and Recovery will ensure the State has the ability to provide leadership and coordination to help the State better prepare for, and recover from, future disasters.

As OPSD does not currently have capacity to provide the necessary staffing to support the proposed 15-member working group, we request that \$36,000 in general funds be added to HB300, BED144, to fund one temporary exempt Planning Analyst position for six months, or so much as may be necessary.

OPSD further recommends revising the working group membership by naming the Mayor of each county, or the Mayor's designee, in place of the County civil defense agencies as listed on page 3, lines 1-12. This would allow each County greater flexibility to determine the appropriate representative assigned to long-term resilience.

OPSD stands ready to participate and assist the working group, provided that sufficient funds are appropriated for staff support and funding does not adversely impact Administration priorities.

SCR51 REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE  
ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE PLACEMENT OF AN OFFICE OF  
RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY - SUPPORT  
State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development  
Monday, March 17, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Testimony of**  
**Gwen Yamamoto Lau**  
Executive Director  
**Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority**  
before the  
**Senate Committee on Water and Land**  
Monday, March 17, 2025, 1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229  
in consideration of

**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51 / Senate Resolution No. 33**  
**REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO CONVENE A**  
**WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINITRATIVE PLACEMENT**  
**OF AN OFFICE OF RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY**

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 51 / SR 33 requesting the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to convene a working group to evaluate the establishment and administrative placement of an Office of Resilience and Recovery. The Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority **supports** these resolutions.

Serving as a member of the Climate Advisory Team (CAT) over the past six months has heightened my awareness of the devastating impacts of disasters and underscored the importance of investing in pre-disaster preparedness to mitigate future losses and long-term recovery.

One of the recommendations in the CAT's Policy Recommendations on Climate Disaster, Resilience, Recovery and Funding is to establish a permanent Office of Resilience and Recovery (ORR) to provide the necessary leadership and coordination of a strategic, integrated approach to improve Hawai'i's resilience and preparedness for disasters.

The CAT envisions that a permanent ORR would work hand-in-hand with HI-EMA and other agencies and offices (including the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism Office of Planning and Sustainable Development) to ensure resilience is a top priority. The ORR would serve as a centralized hub, coordinating efforts across state agencies, the four counties, private organizations and community groups to build a more disaster-ready Hawai'i and lead a comprehensive review of the state's critical systems vulnerabilities and implement plans to address these vulnerabilities. The office would also support community-based programs like a home retrofit initiative, resilience hub development, Firewise community implementation, an annual disaster-readiness conference, and long-term resilience planning, focusing on equitable solutions for vulnerable communities.

The CAT specifically did not opine on the placement of the ORR since this decision is best made by the Governor and Legislature. This working group will play a critical role in this important decision.

HGIA defers to OPSD on implementation requirements and other recommendations.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SCR 51 / SR 33.



# Hawai'i Climate Advisory Team

To: Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Water and Land

From: The Climate Advisory Team

**SR33 and SCR51 - Requesting the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to  
Convene a Working Group to Evaluate the Establishment and Administrative  
Placement of an Office of Resilience and Recovery - Support**

Monday, March 17, 2025, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify **in support of SR33 and SCR51** requesting the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to convene a working group to evaluate the establishment and administrative placement of an Office of Resilience and Recovery. As members of the Governor's Climate Advisory Team (CAT), we strongly believe a permanent resilience office is essential for providing the necessary leadership and coordination of a strategic, integrated approach to improve Hawai'i's resilience and preparedness for disasters.

The CAT appreciates the importance of determining the most strategic and effective placement of an Office of Resilience and Recovery. We support establishing a working group of key stakeholders to evaluate the best administrative placement of the state resilience office. Once the office is established, we strongly recommend that the head of the resilience office report directly to the Governor, even if the office is attached to another department.

Both the temporary Hawai'i Office of Recovery and Resiliency (HI-ORR) and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) have elements of resilience in their missions. The CAT finds that responsibility for resilience planning and implementation should reside clearly in one department or office that leads state efforts, coordinates and collaborates with county and community representatives, and ensures a vigorous amplified daily focus on statewide resilience.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee in support of SR33 and SCR51.

With aloha,

The Climate Advisory Team

**SR-33**

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 10:28:11 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/17/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii SUPPORT having an Office of Resilience and Recovery, and suggest it be placed in the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development.