
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EMERGENCY EROSION MITIGATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's coastal
2 communities are experiencing increasing instances of rapid
3 shoreline erosion that threaten existing homes, public safety,
4 coastal access, and essential public infrastructure. While
5 Act 16, Session Laws of Hawaii 2020, strengthened the State's
6 policy of preserving natural shoreline processes and generally
7 prohibiting private shoreline hardening structures, the
8 legislature recognizes that some flexibility is necessary to
9 address situations where erosion poses an imminent threat to
10 life, property, or public safety.

11 The legislature further finds that chapter 205A, Hawaii
12 Revised Statutes, currently restricts private shoreline
13 hardening through an express prohibition, which may limit the
14 ability of state and county authorities to authorize narrowly
15 tailored erosion control measures in emergency circumstances.
16 The legislature believes that amending this framework to require
17 the minimization, rather than the absolute prohibition, of



1 shoreline hardening will allow the use of carefully reviewed and
2 appropriately conditioned emergency measures where necessary,
3 while preserving the State's strong policy preference against
4 unnecessary or excessive shoreline armoring.

5 The legislature recognizes that an emergency land use
6 permitting process exists under the jurisdiction of the
7 department of land and natural resources for lands within the
8 conservation district. However, the existing statutory
9 framework does not establish a defined duration for emergency
10 permits or clarify their role as temporary measures intended to
11 stabilize conditions while longer-term solutions are evaluated
12 and pursued through applicable land use and shoreline management
13 processes, including those under chapter 205A, Hawaii Revised
14 Statutes. This lack of clarity has resulted in uncertainty for
15 applicants, regulators, and affected communities.

16 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

17 (1) Amend section 205A-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to
18 replace the absolute prohibition on private shoreline
19 hardening with a policy requiring the minimization of
20 these structures, thereby allowing limited, carefully



8 These amendments are intended to provide a balanced,
9 responsible, and clearly regulated approach that allows
10 emergency and, where appropriate, longer-term shoreline
11 protection measures, while maintaining Hawaii's long-standing
12 commitment to preserving natural shoreline processes and public
13 coastal resources.

14 SECTION 2. Chapter 183C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
15 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
16 and to read as follows:

17 "S183C- Emergency permits. (a) An emergency permit
18 issued pursuant to this chapter shall be valid for a period of
19 up to five years from the date of issuance. The chairperson, or
20 the deputy director when acting in the chairperson's absence,
21 may authorize one or more extensions of an emergency permit



1 beyond the initial approved period only upon a determination,
2 supported by written findings, that:

3 (1) Emergency conditions or public safety concerns persist
4 notwithstanding the measures authorized under the
5 permit; and
6 (2) Continued authorization of the emergency use remains
7 necessary to prevent imminent harm while longer-term
8 solutions consistent with the conservation district
9 are pursued.

10 (b) A permittee seeking an extension shall submit a
11 written request no later than ninety days prior to the
12 expiration of the initial permit period, including documentation
13 demonstrating the continuing emergency condition and the steps
14 taken or planned to address the underlying cause of the
15 emergency."

16 SECTION 3. Section 205A-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

18 "(c) Policies.

19 (1) Recreational resources;

20 (A) Improve coordination and funding of coastal
21 recreational planning and management; and



(B) Provide adequate, accessible, and diverse recreational opportunities in the coastal zone management area by:

- (i) Protecting coastal resources uniquely suited for recreational activities that cannot be provided in other areas;
- (ii) Requiring restoration of coastal resources that have significant recreational and ecosystem value, including but not limited to coral reefs, surfing sites, fishponds, sand beaches, and coastal dunes, when these resources will be unavoidably damaged by development; or requiring monetary compensation to the State for recreation when restoration is not feasible or desirable;
- (iii) Providing and managing adequate public access, consistent with conservation of natural resources, to and along shorelines with recreational value;



- 1 (iv) Providing an adequate supply of shoreline
- 2 parks and other recreational facilities
- 3 suitable for public recreation;
- 4 (v) Ensuring public recreational uses of county,
- 5 state, and federally owned or controlled
- 6 shoreline lands and waters having
- 7 recreational value consistent with public
- 8 safety standards and conservation of natural
- 9 resources;
- 10 (vi) Adopting water quality standards and
- 11 regulating point and nonpoint sources of
- 12 pollution to protect, and where feasible,
- 13 restore the recreational value of coastal
- 14 waters;
- 15 (vii) Developing new shoreline recreational
- 16 opportunities, where appropriate, such as
- 17 artificial lagoons, artificial beaches, and
- 18 artificial reefs for surfing and fishing;
- 19 and
- 20 (viii) Encouraging reasonable dedication of
- 21 shoreline areas with recreational value for



7 (2) Historic resources;

8 (A) Identify and analyze significant archaeological
9 resources;

10 (B) Maximize information retention through
11 preservation of remains and artifacts or salvage
12 operations; and

13 (C) Support state goals for protection, restoration,
14 interpretation, and display of historic
15 resources;

16 (3) Scenic and open space resources;

17 (A) Identify valued scenic resources in the coastal
18 zone management area;

19 (B) Ensure that new developments are compatible with
20 their visual environment by designing and
21 locating those developments to minimize the



alteration of natural landforms and existing public views to and along the shoreline;

(C) Preserve, maintain, and, where desirable, improve and restore shoreline open space and scenic resources; and

(D) Encourage those developments that are not coastal dependent to locate in inland areas;

(4) Coastal ecosystems;

(A) Exercise an overall conservation ethic, and practice stewardship in the protection, use, and development of marine and coastal resources;

(B) Improve the technical basis for natural resource management;

(C) Preserve valuable coastal ecosystems of significant biological or economic importance, including reefs, beaches, and dunes;

(D) Minimize disruption or degradation of coastal water ecosystems by effective regulation of stream diversions, channelization, and similar land and water uses, recognizing competing water needs; and







1 (C) Communicate the potential short and long-term
2 impacts of proposed significant coastal
3 developments early in their life cycle and in
4 terms understandable to the public to facilitate
5 public participation in the planning and review
6 process;

7 (8) Public participation;
8 (A) Promote public involvement in coastal zone
9 management processes;
10 (B) Disseminate information on coastal management
11 issues by means of educational materials,
12 published reports, staff contact, and public
13 workshops for persons and organizations concerned
14 with coastal issues, developments, and government
15 activities; and
16 (C) Organize workshops, policy dialogues, and site-
17 specific mediations to respond to coastal issues
18 and conflicts;

19 (9) Beach protection;
20 (A) Locate new structures inland from the shoreline
21 setback to conserve open space, minimize



interference with natural shoreline processes, and minimize loss of improvements due to erosion;

- (B) [Prohibit] Minimize the construction of private shoreline hardening structures, including seawalls and revetments, at sites having sand beaches and at sites where shoreline hardening structures interfere with existing recreational and waterline activities;
- (C) Minimize the construction of public shoreline hardening structures, including seawalls and revetments, at sites having sand beaches and at sites where shoreline hardening structures interfere with existing recreational and waterline activities;
- (D) Minimize grading of and damage to coastal dunes;
- (E) Prohibit private property owners from creating a public nuisance by inducing or cultivating the private property owner's vegetation in a beach transit corridor; and
- (F) Prohibit private property owners from creating a public nuisance by allowing the private property



owner's unmaintained vegetation to interfere or encroach upon a beach transit corridor; and

(10) Marine and coastal resources;

(A) Ensure that the use and development of marine and coastal resources are ecologically and environmentally sound and economically beneficial;

(B) Coordinate the management of marine and coastal resources and activities to improve effectiveness and efficiency;

(C) Assert and articulate the interests of the State as a partner with federal agencies in the sound management of ocean resources within the United States exclusive economic zone;

(D) Promote research, study, and understanding of ocean and coastal processes, impacts of climate change and sea level rise, marine life, and other ocean resources to acquire and inventory information necessary to understand how coastal development activities relate to and impact ocean and coastal resources; and



1 (E) Encourage research and development of new,
2 innovative technologies for exploring, using, or
3 protecting marine and coastal resources."

4 SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
5 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
6 begun before its effective date.

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

9 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

10

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 26 2026



H.B. NO. 2205

Report Title:

Coastal Zone Management; Erosion Mitigation; Shorelines; Permits

Description:

Replaces the current statutory prohibition on private shoreline hardening with a policy directing the minimization of these structures. Establishes a clear, time-limited statutory framework for emergency permits within the conservation district, including defined standards for permit duration and extension.

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