



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

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director

before the
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS**

Wednesday, February 25, 2026
10:57 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 221

in consideration of
SB 3002,
RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE PLANNING ACT.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) would like to offer the following **comments with a concern** on SB 3002, which establishes green infrastructure objectives, policies, and priority guidelines in the Hawai'i State Planning Act.

Green infrastructure has the potential to improve quality of life for both Hawai'i's residents and visitors. The incorporation of green infrastructure into state facility systems, infrastructure, and transit projects supports the State's sustainable, long-term development. The *Hawai'i State Plan Phase I Update Report (2018)* highlights the need to address topics relating to green infrastructure, including Sustainability, Green Practices, Climate Change, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship, Self-reliance/Resiliency/Security, and Local Food Production—all of which align with the intent of SB 3002.

While OPSD supports the intent of this measure, **OPSD is concerned** that it may be redundant with current efforts to comprehensively review and propose updates to the Hawai'i State Planning Act pursuant to Act 36, SLH 2024. This ongoing work provides an opportunity for concepts such as those presented in SB 3002 to be considered as part of a broader set of recommended updates, which will be submitted in a final report to the Legislature ahead of the 2027 Legislative Session. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2026
1:48 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3002, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE PLANNING ACT**

Senate Bill 3002, Senate Draft 1 establishes green infrastructure objectives, policies, and priority guidelines for State facility systems, infrastructure, and transit projects in the Hawai'i State Planning Act to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors; adds a definition of "green infrastructure"; and requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to submit a report to the Legislature with recommendations for implementing green infrastructure objectives, policies, and priority guidelines. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

Hawai'i's commitment to uphold the Paris Climate Accord and its progressive move toward a zero-emissions, clean economy by 2045 requires that we actively invest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄). Meeting these targets will require both emissions reductions and meaningful carbon sequestration strategies. Green infrastructure provides a robust and cost-effective framework for climate resilience, where the co-benefits of carbon sequestration, ecosystem enhancement, and economic vitality come together.

Green infrastructure provides vital ecosystem services, such as stormwater management by collecting, slowing, and filtering water as it moves from land to sea. These functions help reduce flooding, improve water quality, recharge groundwater, and protect coral reefs and coastal ecosystems. Investing in carbon-positive initiatives like green infrastructure also supports a healthier Hawai'i, as green spaces offer key public health benefits, including cooling urban heat

islands, enhancing air quality, supporting mental health, and increasing overall community well-being.

The Department supports including landscape-scale practices within the definition of green infrastructure. As noted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), green infrastructure can encompass site-specific management methods and watershed-wide techniques, such as land preservation and the restoration of wetlands and floodplains that naturally store water and decrease runoff. Incorporating both site-level and watershed-scale strategies ensures that green infrastructure planning is comprehensive, science-based, and aligned with natural systems.

This measure closely aligns with the mission of the Department's Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program, which exists to support all Hawai'i's communities in fostering wellbeing and resilience through planting, caring for, and building relationships with the trees and forests we rely on, which are vital to the ecosystems we depend on. We do this for our keiki, our kūpuna, ourselves, our 'āina, and everyone's future.

The Kaulunani Program strengthens our communities' ability to plan for, establish, manage, and protect all types of green infrastructure, including street trees, urban forests, green spaces, bioswales, and related natural areas where we live, work, and play. Hawai'i's urban tree canopy is declining, along with the many ecological, social, and economic benefits provided by urban green infrastructure. This measure aims to help reverse that trend by increasing statewide commitment and coordination.

The Department also values strong collaboration with the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, county partners, and community-based organizations to ensure coordinated implementation and alignment with State efforts on climate, hazard mitigation, and land use planning.

Finally, the Department notes that although native and Polynesian-introduced trees and vegetation are preferred for green infrastructure projects, it is not always feasible to use native and Polynesian-introduced species due to site conditions, availability, or limitations on survivability. When these species are impractical or unavailable, non-invasive species identified by the Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment and Plant Pono should be used to avoid unintended ecological harm.

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



Written Testimony before the Senate
Committee on Ways & Means

Wednesday, Feb 25, 2026 (10:47 am) Conference Room 211

RE: SB 3002 Relating to the Hawaii State Planning Act

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means:

Trees for Honolulu's Future ("TFHF") is a nonprofit organization with a vision for a tree-filled island that preserves and enhances our quality of life, especially in the face of climate change.

TFHF supports the above-referenced Bill, which establishes green infrastructure objectives, policies, and priority guidelines for state facility systems, infrastructure, and transit projects in the Hawai'i State Planning Act to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Trees create multiple benefits well documented by research and noted in this Bill's preamble. Trees create shade and use evapotranspiration to lower temperature. Trees also recharge groundwater and decrease surface runoff protecting our reefs. Trees trap pollutants and store CO2. Trees calm traffic. Sadly though, Honolulu has been losing urban tree canopy over the past years.

Unfortunately, often green infrastructure is the last item considered and the first "value engineered" out of a capital improvement project, when that is completely opposite of the kind of thinking and action we should be taking. Green infrastructure should be the first item considered and the last to be cut.

This Bill has an important accountability aspect by requiring the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to submit a report to the legislature making recommendations for implementing the green infrastructure objectives, policies, and priority guidelines established by this measure. That's important because execution is where the "rubber meets the road". We are confident that if all government agencies act in support of mitigating climate change, this Bill will result in much-needed positive change. The best time to act was 20 years ago, the next best, is today.

We urge passage of this bill, sending it to the Senate floor, and ultimately crossover to the House.

Sincerely,

Daniel Dinell, President

HONOLULU is HOT TREES are COOL

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