THE SENATE
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 657

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT.

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

SECTION 1. The legisture finds that leaders in the State are keenly aware of the vulnerabilities and threats posed by climate change hazards, however no individual office or agency is responsible for developing community resiliency plans.

The legislature also finds that community resiliency is addressed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's leading authority on climate science. In its latest Assestment Report 6 (AR6), the IPCC defined the term "climate resilient development". The legislature finds that climate resilience development combines strategies to adapt to climate change with actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to support sustainable development with an emphasis on social equity for all communities.

The legislature further finds that AR6 also defines climate resilient development involving questions of equity and system transitions in land, ocean, and ecosystems; urban and

infrastructure; energy; industry; and society, and includes adaptations for human, ecosystem and planetary health.

The legislature finds that given the lack of climate resilient development capacity in the State, the legislature proposes leveraging existing modeling expertise in the school of ocean and earth science and technology (SOEST) at the university of Hawaii at Manoa, which has already been working with communities to identify multiple forms of flooding due to sea level rise, hurricane storm surge, heat projections, and leverages campus-wide expertise in wildfire ignition modeling. Additionally, the State utilizes modeling products developed by SOEST for the mandatory disclosure of sea level rise in real estate transactions pursuant to section 508D-15(a)(5) and the analysis of sea level rise required by the State's environmental review process. The counties also rely on modeling products developed by SOEST to carry out ordinances related to shoreline setbacks and special management areas.

The legislature also finds that these modeling capacities at SOEST are currently funded by soft money grants and contracts and thus are a fragile resource for Hawaii to depend on for community-focused climate science and could disappear any year

if funding failed to materialize. The legislature notes that due to the incoming federal administration's desire to cut budgets and hostility to climate research, this critical research is at risk of being lost.

The legislature finds that there should be created a center for climate resilient development in SOEST at the university of Hawaii at Manoa. The center should be a community-focused resource that provides guidance on climate hazards, works moku by moku across the state assessing risk and vulnerabilities to climate hazards, and makes recommendations for capital improvement projects and shovel-ready projects to build resiliency. The center should also continue to seek external funding to bolster its efforts and expand research and modeling capabilities.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to establish and operate the center for climate resilient development.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $3,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year

2026-2027 for the university of Hawaii school of ocean and earth science and technology to establish and operate the center for climate resilient development.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the university of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY: _____

S.B. NO. 657

Report Title:
UH; SOEST; Center for Climate Resilient Development; Climate Change; Appropriations

Description:
Appropriates funds for the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology within the University of Hawaii to establish and operate a Center for Climate Resilient Development.

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