

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 10** , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1598  
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Higher Education, to which was referred  
H.B. No. 1598 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE HAWAII CLIMATE INSTITUTE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish the Hawaii Climate Institute at the University of Hawaii to consolidate expertise, attract federal and philanthropic funding to expand climate and community resilience research, train the next generation of climate professionals, and deliver locally-derived solutions for issues uniquely specific to Hawaii and the Pacific region.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the University of Hawai'i School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology; University of Hawai'i International Pacific Research Center; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Surfrider Foundation; and two individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from two individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General; Department of Taxation; and Care for 'Āina Now Coalition.

Your Committee finds that in the face of escalating impacts of climate change and variability, the University of Hawaii is



uniquely positioned to lead the next phase of climate adaptation by integrating advanced scientific analysis, Hawaiian knowledge systems, and community partnerships to inform action. Your Committee further finds that establishing the Hawaii climate institute at the University of Hawaii would offset the gaps created by federal funding cuts through state level support.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Amending language to clarify that the Act involves a matter of statewide concern;
- (2) Changing the number of positions to an unspecified amount and deleting language requiring the University of Hawaii President to allocate funds and hire certain positions;
- (3) Changing the percentage of additional revenue to be allocated in support of the programs and operations of the Hawaii Climate Institute to an unspecified percentage;
- (4) Changing the general fund appropriations to unspecified amounts and specifically authorizing the appropriation to support the core operations of the Hawaii Climate Institute to allow for the hiring of staff;
- (5) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (6) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Higher Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1598, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1598, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Higher Education,

  
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ANDREW TAKUYA GARRETT, Chair



