



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/03/2026
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Committee: FIN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1925, HD1, RELATING TO CLIMATE EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes the Department of Education to establish a climate literacy certificate program to provide students with an advanced understanding of climate change through academic coursework and hands-on learning. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 1925, HD1, and offers comments. The Department values the Legislature's commitment to addressing climate change and agrees that students should develop the knowledge and skills needed to think critically and engage as future climate leaders.

HB 1925 proposes establishing a Climate Literacy Certificate Program for high school students that requires completion of at least two approved courses aligned with climate literacy standards and includes an experiential learning component. Establishing a statewide certificate program would require coordinated operational structures, sustained resources, professional learning, staffing, and systems necessary to support course approval, experiential learning expectations, student recognition, and ongoing program oversight. The Department recognizes the importance of advancing climate literacy statewide and supports the intent of the bill, provided that funding does not impact the Department's Board-approved budget.

The Department remains committed to strengthening climate science instruction within existing resources and partnerships. Climate-related concepts are embedded throughout the Next Generation Science Standards, which guide science instruction statewide. The Department will continue supporting educators in implementing these standards and providing climate literacy opportunities for students across the state.

The Department offers these comments for consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1925 HD1.



Chair Todd
Vice Chair Takenouchi
House Committee on Finance

Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026
2:00 PM

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1925 HD1 RELATING TO CLIMATE
EDUCATION**

Aloha Members of the House Committee on Education,

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission was first created through Act 106 in 2018, "to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State." The Hawai'i State Youth Commission's Environment legislative committee is in **strong support** of **HB1925 HD1**.

As the youth of Hawai'i, we are already experiencing the effects of climate change. From extreme weather events to threats to our food system and the increasing cost of living, these are indicators of an increasingly climate-affected future. However, many of our peers do not have access to education that connects these impacts to solutions and future careers in mitigation and adaptation. A climate literacy certificate would incentivize schools to offer climate-related courses and, in doing so, create a clear pathway for students interested in sustainability and resilience work - ensuring that students graduate prepared to take on green jobs. In requiring both classroom and experiential learning, HB1925 HD1 brings much-needed climate education and real-world problem-solving in our communities.

The commission views this program as an investment in the next generation of leaders who will be integral to meeting the State's goals of one hundred percent renewable electricity by 2045 and at least fifty percent below 2005 greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. When students learn climate literacy through both classes and projects, it prepares them for informed decision-making and community resilience efforts across Hawai'i.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State Youth Commission is in strong support of HB1925 HD1 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission

hawaiistateyc@gmail.com



HOUSE BILL 1925, HD1, RELATING TO CLIMATE EDUCATION

MARCH 3, 2026 · FIN HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 1925, HD1, relating to climate education, which authorizes the Department of Education to establish a climate literacy certificate program to provide students with an advanced understanding of climate change through academic coursework and hands-on learning.

As Hawai'i confronts rapidly intensifying climate impacts—including sea-level rise, ocean warming and acidification, extreme rainfall events, drought, and coral reef decline—educating our students about climate science, mitigation strategies, adaptation responses, and resilience planning is essential to protect our communities, environment, and economy. Climate change education is not solely about imparting scientific knowledge. It is a critical component of empowering young people to understand, anticipate, and act upon one of the defining challenges of our time. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has developed a program that emphasizes that climate literacy enables individuals to “understand your influence on climate and climate’s influence on you and society,” recognizing that education is foundational to informed decision-making and civic engagement.

Students equipped with climate understanding are better prepared to participate in solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase community resilience. According to research

published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate mitigation and adaptation successes require broad social engagement, informed policy choices, and a workforce capable of contributing to sustainable technologies. When students learn about the causes and consequences, of climate change, they can contribute as informed citizens and future innovators who will shape Hawai'i's climate future.

Integration of climate education also strengthens Hawai'i's resilience and disaster preparedness. Pacific island states and territories are on the frontlines of climate impacts. Hawai'i's communities have experienced more frequent extreme weather, coastal inundation, and shifts in agricultural viability. Teaching students how climate systems operate and how communities can adapt gives them not only content knowledge, but also the ability to participate in community planning, resource management, and locally rooted climate solutions.

Additionally, climate change education supports equity and justice. National research indicates that communities of color and low-income populations disproportionately bear the brunt of climate impacts, including heat stress, flooding, and environmental health risks. By integrating climate education across curricula, Hawai'i can help ensure that all students, and especially those from vulnerable communities, understand how climate effects intersect with health, economics, and social systems, and how climate actions can promote equity rather than exacerbate disparities.

Finally, climate literacy yields measurable academic benefits. Studies show that curricula incorporating real-world issues like climate change enhance student engagement, critical thinking, interdisciplinary learning, and problem solving, all skills aligned with Hawai'i's academic standards and preparing students for careers in sustainable industries. Integrating climate content across subjects connects classroom learning to local contexts and lived experiences. By doing so, this measure advances climate preparedness, builds capacity for future employment in the green economy, and fosters communities where young people—our future scientists, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders—understand both the urgency of the climate emergency and the pathways to effective solutions.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com · 808-679-7454



To: The House Committee on Finance (FIN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 2pm

In support of HB1925 HD1

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and FIN Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **supports HB1925 HD1** that would authorize a climate literacy certificate program to provide students with an advanced understanding of climate change through academic coursework and hands—on learning.

Young people across the globe are concerned about climate breakdown. A [Lancet study](#) surveying 10,000 young people ages 16 to 25 in 10 countries found that more than half felt sadness, anxiety, anger, and guilt about climate change. They are seeing the impacts of a warming world in the news and in their own communities. Many feel helpless and powerless.

The younger generation recognizes that climate change is going to shape their futures—where they live, the work they will do, and their quality of life. They need climate education in order to develop green skills, adapt to the harsh reality of a warming world, and understand how to combat climate change. But they need to learn the basics of climate change before they can do anything about it.

While much of the focus on combating climate change has been on policy, technological innovation, and adult behavior, an often overlooked yet crucial part of the solution lies in education. HB1925 HD1 addresses this gap.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HB-1925-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:48:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd and members of the FIN committee:

As someone who works with youth in the area of climate advocacy, I'm writing in strong support of HB1925 HD1, which requires the Department of Education to establish a climate literacy certificate program. Please note that this program requires only a shift in curriculum and therefore no additional funds.

As an economist, mentor, and co-founder of the Climate Future Forum, I see the need for youth to have the opportunity to develop greater skills and knowledge to better advocate for their future. They possess the passion and desire to effect change and understand their world. But they often lack the background so that their effectiveness matches their passion.

While the DOE already offers courses that address climate literacy and students are actively engaged in experiential and capstone projects, a critical element is missing. We lack a formal mechanism to elevate and acknowledge student participation in climate education. Providing this recognition is the crucial first step toward ensuring that all young people have the access and opportunity to fully understand the complex scientific, political, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability.

HB1925 HD1 would require the Department of Education to establish a climate literacy certificate program that gives students a deeper, more meaningful understanding of climate change through both academic coursework and hands-on learning. Thus, allowing them to be more effective advocates for their future.

Climate change is already shaping everyday life in Hawai'i. We are seeing the impacts through increasing heat, wildfire risk, sea level rise, coral bleaching, and growing threats to food, water, and housing security. Today's students are growing up in the midst of these changes, yet many do not have access to climate education that is comprehensive, locally grounded, and relevant to the realities they are living. HB1925 HD1 helps address this gap by ensuring students can graduate with a strong foundation in climate science, systems thinking, and applied problem-solving.

By establishing a climate literacy certificate program, Hawai'i has the opportunity to lead nationally in climate education while honoring its constitutional responsibility to protect both our children and the environment on which they depend.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo nui,

Paul Bernstein

Honolulu

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: March 1, 2026

RE: House Bill 1925 HD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO CLIMATE EDUCATION.
Report Title: Education; Climate Change; Climate Literacy Certificate Program;
Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 1925 HD1. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

Aloha, Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Christian, and I am a high school student from O‘ahu. I am once again **testifying in support of HB1925**, advocating that the Department of Education should establish a climate literacy certificate program to provide students with an advanced understanding of climate change through academic coursework and hands-on learning.

Climate change is one of the forefront issues impacting not only the world, but Hawaii, especially. And the keiki, like myself, are the ones who are going to be inheriting a world with climate change. Through HB1925, our state can work to ensure the students of Hawaii are best equipped to be changemakers in society and fight to fix the climate crisis. Being a small island chain in the middle of the Pacific, Hawaii is uniquely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, so our State should work to invest in our collective future: the keiki.

For these reasons, I believe this bill, HB1925, should be passed. Thank you for your consideration.

Me ke aloha,

Christian K.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christian K." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Testimony in Support of HB1925 - Climate Education
Hearing with the House Committee on Finance
Tuesday March 2, 2026

My name is Debbie Millikan and I am writing in **strong support of HB1925**, which requires the Department of Education to establish a climate literacy certificate program.

As a scientist, educator, and co-founder of the Climate Future Forum, I recognize the strong desire among young people to comprehend our rapidly evolving world. While the DOE already offers courses that address climate literacy and students are actively engaged in experiential and capstone projects, a critical element is missing. We lack a formal mechanism to elevate and acknowledge student participation in climate education. Providing this recognition is the crucial first step toward ensuring that all young people have the access and opportunity to fully understand the complex scientific, political, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability.

HB1925 would require the Department of Education to establish a climate literacy certificate program that gives students a deeper, more meaningful understanding of climate change through both academic coursework and hands-on learning. This bill is an important investment in Hawai'i's young people and in our state's long-term climate resilience, workforce readiness, and responsibility to protect a life-sustaining climate.

To earn the certificate, students would need to:

1. Take two approved courses with climate literacy standards, and
2. Complete an experiential learning project.

The Department of Education already offers courses that meet climate literacy standards which can be recognized for the certificate. However, the Department will need to identify the mechanism for ensuring successful completion of the requirements similar to the Seal of Biliteracy that was created in 2017. Furthermore, the expectation is that initial numbers of students participating will be low- when the Seal of Biliteracy was introduced in 2017, it recognized 39 students and has grown to 685 students in 2025.

Climate change is already shaping everyday life in Hawai'i. We are seeing the impacts through increasing heat, wildfire risk, sea level rise, coral bleaching, and growing threats to food, water, and housing security. Today's students are growing up in the midst of these changes, yet many do not have access to climate education that is comprehensive, locally grounded, and relevant to the realities they are living. HB1925 helps address this gap by ensuring students can graduate with a strong foundation in climate science, systems thinking, and applied problem-solving.

By establishing a climate literacy certificate program, Hawai'i has the opportunity to lead nationally in climate education while honoring its constitutional responsibility to protect both our children and the environment they depend on.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, Debbie Millikan, Ph.D.

HB-1925-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:08:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Todd and Vice-Chair Takenouchi,

I am writing in strong support of HB1925, which would provide needed resources to ensure robust climate education statewide. As an educator myself, I know how quality instruction can serve as a cornerstone for Hawaii's future, especially in a world in which we will be among the most affected by a changing climate. Giving students knowledge and resources is an essential first step toward our resiliency as an 'ohana in the face of a rapidly changing world. Thank you for your time, consideration, and support of this vital legislation.

With aloha,

David Ball

Waiālae-Kahala

HB-1925-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:04:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
An Vo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is An and I'm a public health student on O'ahu. I am a member of Climate Future Forum who shared this bill with me. Please support HB1925.

Mahalo,
An
Honolulu

HB-1925-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:27:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua Tom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate literacy is an important skill that is required for the sustainable future of Hawai'i.

Please consider passing this bill as it will keep our keiki aware of a world that is pitted to sink our islands. **We must remain educated in order to change the world**

**Testimony in Strong Support of HB1925 | Seal of Climate Literacy
Hearing with the House Committee on Finance
Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026, at 2:00 PM in Conference Room 308**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Mia Nishiguchi, a senior at Kalani High School. I am writing in strong support of HB1925, the Seal of Climate Literacy bill, which would provide all public high school students across Hawai'i with the opportunity to obtain a climate literacy certificate.

HB 1925 is needed because students are already experiencing the effects of climate change and need in-depth climate literacy to respond. Wildfires, sea level rise, extreme heat, and coastal erosion aren't abstract concepts in Hawai'i; they're daily realities. If we expect young people to lead in resilience and to be locally committed, we have to equip them with the knowledge and tools to do so.

Please support this important bill to acknowledge and provide students with the opportunity to take action for our own future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mia Nishiguchi
Kalani High School

HB-1925-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:19:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia Sousa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of HB1925, which authorizes the Department of Education to establish a climate literacy certificate program to provide students with an advanced understanding of climate change through academic coursework and hands-on learning.

My name is Olivia Sousa, and I am concerned about youth living on Oahu. While climate concepts are technically implemented in our current science standards, there is a difference between passing a test on the concepts of climate change and being equipped to lead a community through a wildfire recovery or a coastal erosion crisis.

In my own education, I have seen how easily the climate science we learn stays trapped in the classroom as a series of daunting facts. Without the experiential learning this certificate provides, many of my peers feel overwhelmed, having climate anxiety, rather than empowered. We don't just need to know that the climate is changing; we need a clear, recognized pathway to apply that knowledge in the real world. By formalizing this certificate, the state is validating climate leadership as a vital workforce skill and further comforting many of the youth, like myself, plagued with anxiety of the outlook for our future.

Climate change is already shaping everyday life in Hawai'i. We are seeing the impacts through increasing heat, wildfire risk, sea level rise, coral bleaching, and growing threats to food, water, and housing security. Today's students are growing up in the midst of these changes, yet many do not have access to climate education that is comprehensive, locally grounded, and relevant to the realities they are living. HB1925 helps address this gap by ensuring students can graduate with a strong foundation in climate science, systems thinking, and applied problem-solving.

The proposed climate literacy certificate emphasizes both academic rigor and experiential learning. This balance matters. Climate literacy is not just about understanding scientific facts; it is about helping students make sense of the world around them, analyze real-world impacts, evaluate possible solutions, and see themselves as informed participants in their communities. Hands-on learning can also strengthen student engagement, support career exploration, and build a sense of agency at a time when many young people are already experiencing the harms of climate change firsthand.

Climate education is also an issue of equity. Climate impacts disproportionately affect students in low-income communities, Native Hawaiian communities, and communities already facing

environmental and health inequities. Ensuring all students have access to high-quality climate education helps make sure those most impacted by climate change are also empowered to lead and benefit from climate solutions.

By establishing a climate literacy certificate program, Hawai'i has the opportunity to lead nationally in climate education while honoring its constitutional responsibility to protect both our children and the environment they depend on.

Thank you very much for your support of youth engagement in climate policy. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Olivia Sousa

Youth Leader, Hawai'i Climate Future Forum

HB-1925-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:19:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia Sousa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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By establishing a climate literacy certificate program, Hawai'i has the opportunity to lead nationally in climate education while honoring its constitutional responsibility to protect both our children and the environment they depend on.

Thank you very much for your support of youth engagement in climate policy. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Olivia Sousa

Youth Leader, Hawai'i Climate Future Forum