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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
LEAH LARAMEE
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission
Co-Chair Ryan K. P. Kanaka'ole**

**Before the House Committee on
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Tuesday, March 17, 2026
9:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3252, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO CLIMATE PLANNING**

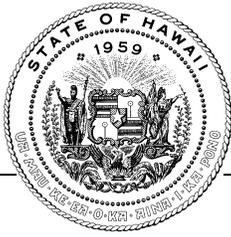
Senate Bill 3252, Senate Draft 2 amends the powers and duties of the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department). This measure establishes a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Coordinator position to lead the Commission and appropriates funds. Finally, this measure requires annual reports to the Governor, Legislature, and counties. **The Department appreciates the intent and offers the following comments.**

This measure recognizes that Hawai'i faces billions of dollars in current and future losses from climate change. In response, it proposes to strengthen statewide coordination and accountability and provide additional positions to support climate action. The Department notes that, if the Commission's authority and responsibilities are expanded while remaining administratively attached to the Department, it is important that the Commission be adequately resourced to operate independently to minimize unintended operational or fiscal impacts on the Department's programs. As with other administratively attached entities, clear distinctions regarding staffing, space, and budget structure are recommended.

The Department respectfully notes that there already is a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Coordinator position, though this measure amends its duties to serve as the chair of the Commission. This structure is modeled after existing governing boards such as the Board of Land and Natural Resources. This measure would task the chair of the Commission with setting agendas and identifying target actions.

This measure requires agency reporting on plans and proposed actions to meet or exceed climate directives and targets. The Department recognizes that additional reporting may add administrative burdens for affected agencies.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



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

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 9:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
SB 3252 SD2
RELATING TO CLIMATE PLANNING.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **offers comments and concerns** on SB 3252 SD 2, which proposes to amend the powers and duties of the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission and to codify a new "Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Coordinator" position to lead the Commission, in place of the existing and currently filled Commission Coordinator role.

While OPSD supports strengthening statewide climate coordination, SB 3252 SD 2 removes the current co-chairs—the Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Director of OPSD—both cabinet-level officials confirmed through the Senate's advice and consent process. Replacing Senate-confirmed leadership with a coordinator raises concerns about accountability, continuity, and institutional authority. Cabinet-level co-chairs provide policy-level direction, cross-agency reach, and direct accountability to the Governor and Legislature, ensuring integrated planning and follow-through.

Under statute, OPSD is responsible for statewide planning, climate and sustainability coordination, and long-range planning and policy alignment across sectors—including land use, sea level rise adaptation, hazard mitigation, infrastructure, housing, economic resilience, and sustainable development. The proposed coordinator's duties substantially duplicate OPSD's statutory responsibilities, creating overlap, diffused accountability, and added fiscal costs to the state.

Centering climate planning leadership within DLNR, whose mission focuses on natural resource and state land management, risks narrowing climate strategy to a resource-management lens. Effective climate planning must be comprehensive and statewide, requiring infrastructure investment, climate-adaptive land use, sustainable development, economic transition planning, and cross-sector coordination.

SB 3252 SD 2 RELATING TO CLIMATE PLANNING - COMMENT
State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
March 17, 2026

Rather than creating parallel structures, OPSD recommends strengthening and adequately funding existing statutory authorities—including OPSD’s—to support statewide climate adaptation and coordination. Funding agencies with existing statutory climate planning and coordination authority will maintain clear leadership, promote fiscal efficiency, and ensure continuity and accountability in Hawai‘i’s climate efforts.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on SB 3252 SD 2.

LATE



SIERRA CLUB
OF HAWAII

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

March 17, 2026

9:15 AM

Conference Room 325

In SUPPORT of SB3252 SD2: RELATING TO CLIMATE PLANNING

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **supports** SB3252 SD2, which provides a critical restructuring of and resources for the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission), as may be needed to facilitate the timely realization of its mission and vision.

With prolonged droughts, historic floods, devastating wildfires, and ever-encroaching sea level rise and groundwater intrusion, the climate crisis is already unfolding throughout our islands. Coordinated, timely, and decisive climate action across all sectors of government is needed now more than ever before, if we wish to leave our children and future generations with a fighting chance of navigating this existential challenge. Accordingly, the Commission's staff has strived to fulfill its mandates to realize a truly resilient future in the face of the growing climate crisis.

Unfortunately, the widely ranging mandates and vast responsibilities of the co-chairs of the Commission, also tasked with overseeing the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development and both the Board of Land & Natural Resources and Commission on Water Resource Management, respectively, appears to have substantially impeded the Commission's critically needed work.

Accordingly, this measure would provide the Commission with the dedicated, consistent leadership necessary to help coordinate Hawai'i-wide efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate destabilization, by appropriately naming the Commission's existing coordinator as its chair, and providing them with resources and reporting mandates that can expedite and motivate the Commission's work.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** SB3252 SD2. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

SB-3252-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 10:54:14 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/17/2026 9:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Christine L. Andrews, J.D. | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I write to you today from Wailuku, Maui in strong support of this measure. As I write this, we are experiencing one of the strongest Kona storms I recall in over 35 years on Maui. There is widespread flooding, damage to streets and water infrastructure. The science shows that these types of events are related to climate change, and that we must prepare for this new reality. I strongly support SB3252 SD2 as a positive step in the right direction of helping Maui and Hawaii become more climate resilient.

Thank you.

SB-3252-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:48:32 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/17/2026 9:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Paul Bernstein | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Perruso, and members of the EEP committee,

I'm writing in strong support of SB3252.SD2.

This past week's storms are a vivid reminder that climate change is upon us. Though climate change is unlikely to be solely responsible for the recent storms it increases the ferocity of these storms. Therefore, Hawai'i needs more resources to address our changing climate.

Please pass SB3252 SD2 out of your committee.

Mahalo nui,

Paul Bernstein

Honolulu

SB-3252-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:09:05 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/17/2026 9:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mark McGuffie | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly support SB3252 relating to Climate planning. Establishes a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Coordinator position to lead the Commission. Requires annual reports to the Governor, Legislature, and counties. Establishes six full-time equivalent positions within the Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. Appropriates funds to address these critical areas.