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**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 Senate Committees on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
AND
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3252
RELATING TO CLIMATE PLANNING**

Senate Bill 3252 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. The bill establishes a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Coordinator position to lead the Commission and appropriates moneys. Finally, the bill requires annual reports to the Governor, Legislature, and counties. **The Commission supports this measure.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 departments, committees, and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Hawai'i is already experiencing significant and compounding impacts from climate change that have cost the State and residents money and devastated lives. This measure strengthens the State's capacity to coordinate, plan, and implement mitigation and adaptation actions across departments and with county and federal partners

This bill recognizes that Hawai'i faces billions of dollars in current and future losses from climate change and strengthens statewide coordination and accountability.

The Commission respectfully notes that there already is a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Coordinator position, though this bill amends the 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 bill would task the chair of the Commission with setting agendas and identifying target actions, while reducing burdens on other agencies.

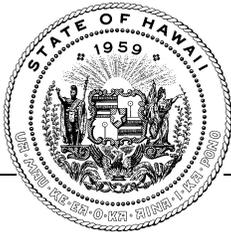
The bill requires agency reporting on plans and proposed actions to meet or exceed climate directives and targets. The Commission understands that additional reporting may add administrative burdens for agencies. The bill appropriates funds and establishes staff positions intended to provide support and technical assistance for practical implementation of climate actions across state and county agencies.

The Commission notes that, if the Commission's authority and responsibilities are expanded while remaining administratively attached to DLNR, it is important that the Commission is adequately resourced to operate independently and not create unintended operational or fiscal impacts to DLNR's existing programs. Clear distinctions regarding staffing, space, and budget structure may be necessary, like other administratively attached entities.

Changes to the membership of the Commission will reduce redundancy and identify members that are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agencies identified. The bill also provides contracting capacity, so the Commission can effectively coordinate, analyze risk, and support agencies.

The Commission emphasizes that action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement resilient solutions remain important for Hawai'i's long-term sustainability and risk reduction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



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

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LATE

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
AND AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

in consideration of
SB 3252
RELATING TO CLIMATE PLANNING.

LATE

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **offers comments and concerns** on SB 3252, 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 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.

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

SB 3252 RELATING TO CLIMATE PLANNING - COMMENT
State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
February 11, 2026

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.

SB-3252

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:34:22 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT