



February 19, 2014

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Comments, Concerns and Support of Intent of SB 2344 Relating to Climate Change (Climate Change Adaption

Thursday, February 20, 2014, at 9:05 a.m., in Conference Room 211

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

SB 2344, SD1. This measure proposes to address climate change adaptation by establishing the Interagency Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Committee (SLRVAC) under the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR); creation of a sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation report that addresses sea level rise impacts statewide to 2050; tasks the Office of Planning with establishing and implementing strategic climate adaptation plans and policy recommendations using the sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation report as a framework for addressing other statewide climate impacts identified under Act 286, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012; and appropriates funds for staffing and resources.

LURF's Position. LURF commends the Senate Majority for including this measure in its package, and appreciates the opportunity to express its **comments, concerns and support of the intent of SB 2344.** This measure is well-meaning and necessary, however, LURF's comments and concerns are summarized as follows:

- **The SLRVAC should include a broader diversity of major stakeholders.** The proposed composition of the SLRVAC includes at least twenty government officials, nineteen of which are either political appointees or elected politicians. This measure should be revised to add key stakeholders who would provide for a broader diversity of policy and professional backgrounds, greater political independence, and the preservation of institutional knowledge.

- **Stakeholders who would be most affected by sea level rise and adaption should be designated as SLRVAC members.** This measure states that the Chairperson “may designate members of the public and experts in the field,” however, there is no requirement to include any major stakeholders as part of the SLRVAC. The SLRVAC should include major stakeholders, including, but not limited to representatives from Hawaii’s large shoreline land owners, the U.S. military, major industries operating along the shorelines, shoreline homeowner groups or the realtor organizations, the construction industry (which will build any adaptive or mitigative structures) and representatives of organizations who do business, or enjoy recreational, conservation and environmental activities along the Hawaii’s shorelines.
- **The political appointees and elected politicians could result in a “temporary” SLRVAC, which could lack institutional knowledge in the future.** The terms of office of most of the nineteen appointed and elected officials is no longer than four years. The Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) laws, which were passed in 2005 and 2008, can illustrate this point. As of 2014, only two major legislative supporters of IAL are still in office and none of the key political appointee department heads remain. The institutional knowledge regarding the IAL lies only with the “major stakeholders” - the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, Land Use Research Foundation, Hawaii Agricultural Research Center, and a few Department of Agriculture employees.
- **The current SLRVAC composition may generate public perception issues.** The SLRVAC would be comprised of twenty members, and approximately nineteen are political appointees or elected politicians (additional members could include more county, state, or federal officials, who would probably subordinates to the political appointees on the SLRVAC). LURF has respect for and confidence in the proposed SLRVAC members, however, given the fact that nineteen of the twenty designated SLRVAC members are either political appointees or elected politicians, there could be public perception issues.
- **A representative of the Department of the Attorney General should be a member of, or advisor to the SLRVAC.** Notwithstanding the above discussion regarding political appointees, there will be a need for legal counsel, as some of the recommended adaption measures may affect private property rights or existing contractual agreements.
- **Experts hired should have the necessary qualifications, have actual expertise and experience in sea level rise vulnerability, adaption, planning, design and construction; and also be subject to a request for proposal or an appropriate state procurement process.** Over the years, LURF has been involved with similar legislative/government efforts, where the responsible State departments or offices (not DLNR), have contracted with organizations or persons who did not have expertise or practical experience in the involved subject matter. The results were not efficient or effective; and were not well-received by the actual stakeholders who were directly affected by those government studies.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports the intent of SB 2344**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration of the concerns expressed and the amendments suggested above.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 20, 2014; 9:05 am
by
J. Kenneth Grace

SB 2344 SD1 RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for this opportunity to comment on SB 2344 SD1, having to do with preparation of the State of Hawaii for climate change, and mitigation of its impacts.

My name is J. Kenneth Grace, and I am the Interim Associate Dean and Associate Director for Research in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am providing personal testimony today on SB 2344 SD1.

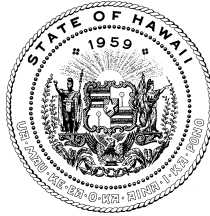
In its current form, SB 2344 SD1 now largely focuses on sea level rise vulnerability, which is certainly a serious concern for Hawaii and other island states. It is also appropriate for this new office to have a concrete initial focus such as this in order to facilitate the development of internal processes.

However, I would like to respectfully remind the members that climate change is projected to have many other significant impacts on island states, in addition to shoreline erosion and dangers posed by sea level rise to human habitations and shoreline resources.

Hawai'i has already experienced six years of drought, which has had a serious negative impact on the livestock sector of our diversified agricultural economy. These drought conditions are projected to increase in frequency and duration. Average temperatures are also projected to increase, which will also impact all aspects of our agricultural economy and our ability to become self-sufficient in food production. An additional impact of sea level rise will be increasing salinity in near-shore agricultural systems such as lo'i. Finally, the impact of drought and increasing temperatures on watersheds and forestry activities are other consequences of climate change that demand preparation.

In sum, I would encourage this new office to broaden its activities in the near future to address the additional deleterious impacts of climate change for Hawaii. The newly designated USDA Climate Hubs, in which CTAHR is partnering with the USDA Forest Service and the USDA Agricultural Research Service, may be of assistance to state agencies in planning to mitigate effects on agriculture and terrestrial resources.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII

**Testimony of
JACQUELINE KOZAK THIEL
State Sustainability Coordinator**

**Before the Senate Committees on
WAYS & MEANS**

**Thursday February 20, 2014
9:05 am
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2344
RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

Senate Bill 2344 proposes to address climate change impacts in Hawaii through an integrated approach to support research, long-range planning, and coordination. Senate Draft 1 proposes an initial focus on sea level rise. **The State Sustainability Coordinator is in strong support of this measure.**

Thank you for the majority support of this measure and including the resources needed to work towards a more resilient Hawaii. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.