



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. BOX 3378  
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378

WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0441  
RELATING TO CLIMATE EQUITY**

REPRESENTATIVE KYLE YAMASHITA, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: 3/1/2023

Room Number: 308

**Fiscal Implications:** This measure will impact the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and personnel priorities.

**Department Testimony:** The Department supports this measure which seeks to develop and maintain a database and web portal tool to expand our understanding of social vulnerability to climate change in Hawaii.

The Department recognizes the growing and alarming impacts of climate change on human health and the environment and that those impacts will be greater in certain communities. As programs within the Department expand their work related to climate change and plan adaptive and mitigation strategies, improving the understanding of where these impacts will be most severe and which communities are most susceptible to the impacts of climate change is very valuable. A database and web portal tool such as the one proposed in this bill will provide valuable information for the Department's programs for strategic planning and allocation of resources.

In addition, with the development of the Federal Justice 40 Initiative and the requirement that federal funds be significantly directed to disadvantaged or environmental justice communities, this tool will provide the Department with a useful tool to identify, direct and document the work done in these communities.

**Offered Amendments:** None

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Josh Green  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**Co-Chairs:**  
Chair, DLNR  
Director, OPSD

**Commissioners:**  
Chair, Senate AEN  
Chair, Senate WTL  
Chair, House EEP  
Chair, House WAL  
Chairperson, HTA  
Chairperson, DOA  
CEO, OHA  
Chairperson, DHHL  
Director, DBEDT  
Director, DOT  
Director, DOH  
Chairperson, DOE  
Director, C+C DPP  
Director, Maui DP  
Director, Hawai'i DP  
Director, Kaua'i DP  
The Adjutant General  
Manager, CZM

**STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION  
COMMISSION  
POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809**

**Testimony of  
Leah Laramee  
Coordinator, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission**

**Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, March 1, 2023  
10:00 AM**

**State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308**

**In support of  
House Bill 441 House Draft 1  
RELATING TO RELATING TO CLIMATE EQUITY**

House Bill 441 HD1 appropriates funds for the development of a database and data portal from data sources detailed in the May 2022 report on social vulnerability to climate change in Hawai'i, under certain conditions. Appropriates funds for the maintenance and updating of the data portal. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different departments, committees, and counties. It is co-chaired by the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Office of Planning. The Commission's mission statement identifies equity as one of three primary considerations for all climate action. The Commission's 2019 statement on climate equity urges all government entities in Hawai'i to use a vulnerability framework that is appropriate for Hawai'i, and to incorporate cultural responsiveness, and reflect indigenous voices and customary law practices to identify any inequitable distribution of benefits, burdens and processes caused by climate change impacts and policy. Although climate change negatively affects all of us, some communities face disproportionate impacts through no fault of their own. Factors such as demographics, socioeconomic status, and limited access to resources can make it much harder to prepare for and recover from climate change. Because of these conditions, events such as extreme weather, sea level rise, heatwaves, flooding, and erosion might prove a hazard for some, but a disaster for others.

Federal equity tools do not sufficiently address local realities and are not refined enough to be used for local and state planning tools. To address this, the Hawai'i State Climate Commission partnered with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, stakeholders, and community to produce the Social Vulnerability to Climate Change in Hawai'i: Data, Indicators, and "Gap" Assessment. The

Assessment identifies current research and tools to identify social vulnerability and climate hazard exposure. The project has resulted in two key recommendations. The creation of a comprehensive, user-friendly data portal on social vulnerability and climate change was one of these recommendations. Accessible information will support decision-makers, non-profits, and community leaders in addressing social vulnerability throughout their work and assist in uplifting communities impacted by climate change.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

March 1, 2023, 10:00 AM

Room 308

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 441 HD1

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee:

Blue Planet Foundation **supports HB 441 HD1**, which funds the development of a Hawai'i-specific database to identify which residents and communities are most vulnerable to the numerous environmental, economic, and public health impacts of climate change.

The State of Hawai'i has committed to a decisive transition away from fossil fuels. The legislature has passed aggressive carbon reduction goals, including a mandate to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2045 (Act 97 of 2015), and a goal to be carbon-negative by 2045 (Act 15 of 2018), with an interim goal to achieve a 50% reduction from 2005 levels by 2030 (Act 238 of 2022).

Although we are making progress towards these goals, we also recognize that the impacts of climate change are already being experienced in our islands and will continue to intensify.<sup>1</sup> These impacts— such as extreme weather events, human health effects, food and water insecurity, forced displacement, and other related risks—could have a disproportionate impact on economically disadvantaged communities, indigenous residents, children, the sick, and the elderly.

To address this, in 2021 and 2022 the Hawai'i State Climate Commission partnered with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and other stakeholders to produce a report titled, *Social Vulnerability to Climate Change in Hawai'i: Data, Indicators, and "Gap" Assessment*.<sup>2</sup> The report identifies national and local research and tools available to assess the social vulnerability of Hawai'i's residents through various indicators. Ultimately, the report produced a key recommendation that the state fund and develop a comprehensive, user-friendly data portal on social vulnerability and climate change risks in Hawai'i.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Sea Grant College Program. "Climate Change Impacts in Hawai'i - A summary of climate change and its impacts to Hawai'i's ecosystems and communities." June 2014. (<https://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/smFINAL-HawaiiClimateChange.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Institute for Sustainability and Resilience, "Social Vulnerability to Climate Change in Hawai'i: Data, Indicators, and "Gap" Assessment." May 2022. ([https://climate.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SCOVI-Report-Final\\_5\\_4\\_22\\_Clean-1.pdf](https://climate.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SCOVI-Report-Final_5_4_22_Clean-1.pdf))

We strongly support HB 441 HD1 to provide the funding capacity necessary to produce a Hawai'i-specific social vulnerability index and appreciate the amendments made in the HD1 to appropriate funds directly to the University of Hawai'i to help avoid state procurement delays. A holistic, equitable approach to addressing climate change is necessary to ensure marginalized communities are identified and uplifted in our climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. This bill is a critical tool to support decision-makers in collective planning efforts and help identify safety net gaps so that, together, we can create a healthier, more resilient future for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



## HB 441, HD1, RELATING TO CLIMATE EQUITY

MARCH 1, 2023 · HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE ·  
CHAIR REP. KYLE YAMASHITA

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** Imua Alliance supports HB 441, HD1, relating to climate equity, which appropriates funds for the development of a database and data portal from data sources detailed in the May 2022 report on social vulnerability to climate change in Hawai'i, under certain conditions; and appropriates funds for the maintenance and updating of the data portal.

According to a report produced by the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, global sea levels could rise more than three feet by 2100, with more recent projections showing this occurring as early as 2060. In turn, over the next 30 to 70 years, approximately 6,500 structures and 19,800 people statewide will be exposed to chronic flooding.

Additionally, an estimated \$19 billion in economic loss would result from chronic flooding of land and structures located in exposure areas. Finally, approximately 38 miles of coastal roads and 550 cultural sites would be chronically flooded, on top of the 13 miles of beaches that have already been lost on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui to erosion fronting shoreline armoring, like seawalls.

Furthermore, according to research conducted by Michael B. Gerrard from Columbia Law School, modern-day slavery tends to increase after natural disasters or conflicts where large numbers of people are displaced from their homes. In the decades to come, says Gerrard, climate change will very likely lead to a significant increase in the number of people who are displaced

**and, thus vulnerable, to human trafficking.** While the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 established objectives to limit global temperature increases and several international agreements are aimed at combating modern-day slavery, it is highly uncertain whether they will be adequate to cope with the scale of the problem that is likely to occur as a result of climate change.

As we work to reduce carbon emissions and stave off the worst consequences of climate change, we must begin preparing for the adverse impact of sea level rise on our shores. We are now quantifying the speed at which we must act. We cannot continue to develop the 25,800-acre statewide sea level rise exposure area—one-third of which is designated for urban use—without risking massive structural damage and, potentially, great loss of life.

Therefore, our state should identify and publicize data about geographic and demographic groups that are most susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change. Maintaining this information will allow the state to develop dynamic and locally-specific interventions that strengthen our islands' climate resilience and adaptivity. For the sake of our keiki, we cannot afford to wait to solidify strategies to preserve our island home for generations to come.

**Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · [kris@imuaalliance.org](mailto:kris@imuaalliance.org)**

**HB-441-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 1:07:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Virginia Tincher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Members of the FIN Committee,

Thank you members Cochran, Kahaloa, Nishimoto, PoePoe and others for introducing HB441 to appropriate funds for development of a database and data portal on social vulnerability to climate change in Hawai'i.

As a state we have committed to acting to avoid or improve vulnerability to climate change to those most impacted and readily available data will give planners of programs access to the information they need.

I spent my career in software development on multiple database projects and know the value to customers of access to information. Thank you for considering this important next step.

Virginia Tincher

Aina Haina, Oahu



**HB-441-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 5:22:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wast of Tax payer Moneys. There is no such thing as Climate Change this is all a Bull shit SCAM and if you hand the Guts to Look it up you would Find out this Scam has bin going on for Decads. By the Elites and Government Officials!!!

**HB-441-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:02:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate change has dynamic, interrelated impacts on the Hawaiian Islands that require interdisciplinary, intersectional solutions. However, climate action is often inefficiently and ineffectively siloed. Because the impacts of climate change prompt and transform ways of conceptualizing human impacts and responses, planning for and adapting to these impacts requires society-wide interventions.

These interventions require contextually relevant and applicable data and tools that are specific to Hawai‘i. The May 2022 report, “Social Vulnerability to Climate Change in Hawai‘i—Data, Indicators, and ‘Gap’ Assessment,” the Hawai‘i climate change mitigation and adaptation commission identified data gaps that relate to a range of social vulnerability tools and climate change exposures.

This bill would help communities and county, state, and federal agencies better understand the social impacts of climate change in the state by appropriating funds for the development of a database and data portal from data sources detailed in the Hawai‘i climate change mitigation and adaptation commission report. Please pass HB441 HD1.

**HB-441-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 6:12:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HD1. Thank you.