

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

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HR0182
RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT.**

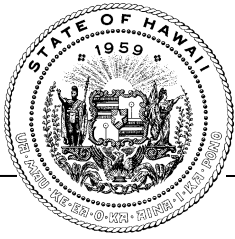
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: 3/20/2025

Room Number: 325

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure will not impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and
3 personnel priorities.
- 4 **Department Testimony:** The Department supports HR0182 and recognizes that the changing
5 climate is a worldwide environmental health problem that directly impacts the health and safety
6 of Hawaii's people, communities, and natural environment. Potential human health effects
7 resulting from climate change are broad reaching and include dangers from increased natural
8 disasters and flooding, changing vector-borne infectious diseases and food related infections, as
9 well as impacts on mental health and well-being. Hawaii has been a national leader in taking
10 steps to increase resilience and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.
- 11
- 12 The need to build out further capacity throughout Hawai'i to address climate change impact to
13 the environment and community resiliency is of the utmost importance. By improving the
14 collaboration of statewide organization to address climate change we will further protect the
15 future of the Hawai'i state community.
- 16
- 17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Thursday, March 20, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
HCR 188 / HR 182
**DECLARING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RELATING TO CLIMATE
CHANGE AND REQUESTING STATEWIDE COORDINATION TO IDENTIFY, PLAN
FOR, AND CREATE CROSS-SECTOR SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN HAWAII'S
PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS.**

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** HCR 188/HR 182 and strongly affirms the need for statewide climate coordination to enhance Hawai'i's response to the climate crisis.

This resolution appropriately references Senate Resolution 44 (2021), which declared a climate emergency—an effort that OPSD strongly supported and championed. Additionally, the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan—the State's official climate and sustainability strategic action plan under Hawai'i Revised Statutes §226-65—reinforces the critical need for comprehensive, statewide coordination in climate mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development.

OPSD is mandated by multiple statutes (HRS §§ 225M-2(b)(9), 225M-8, 225M-9, 226-65, 226-108, and 226-109) to lead efforts in coordinating sea level rise, climate change, and sustainability policies across state, county, and private sectors. However, despite these legal responsibilities, OPSD has consistently lacked the necessary staffing and funding to effectively fulfill these mandates. **Since 2018, OPSD has repeatedly requested additional staff and budgetary support for the State Sustainability Branch from the Legislature, yet these critical resources remain unallocated. Without adequate personnel and funding, the State's ability to implement meaningful, cross-sector climate solutions remains severely limited.**

While OPSD supports this resolution, we respectfully urge the Legislature to recognize that policy mandates are necessary but insufficient without the staffing and resources needed for execution.

Ensuring Hawai'i meets its climate goals requires more than policy commitments—it requires the necessary capacity, funding, and staffing to turn these commitments into actions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HIPHI Board

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Department of Pediatrics

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Misty Pacheco, DrPH

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP

Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD

Medical-Legal Partnership

For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai

HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH

John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native

Hawaiian Research Office

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a

Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 20, 2025

To: Representative Nicole Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy Perruso, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environmental
Protection

RE: Support for HCR 188/HR 182, Declaring A Public Health Emergency
Relating To Climate Change And Requesting Statewide Coordination To Identify,
Plan For, And Create Cross-Sector Solutions To Strengthen Hawaii's Public Health
Response To The Climate Crisis

Hrg: Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 10:00 AM, Conference Room 325

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) is in **support of HCR 188 / HR 182**, which declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and calls for statewide cross-sector coordination to develop and implement solutions that bolster Hawai'i's public health resilience to the climate crisis.

Climate Change is a Public Health Crisis

Climate change has moved beyond being just an environmental concern to become one of the greatest threats to human health worldwide. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) note that climate stressors—including extreme heat, rising sea levels, stronger storms, and vector-borne diseases—disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.¹

As recognized by the legislature in 2023, climate change will intensify extreme weather events in Hawai'i, increase temperatures, threaten local agriculture and food security, and increase the risk of vector-borne and waterborne diseases [Figure 1].² Rising sea levels and heavy storms strain our outdated cesspools, degrading water quality, and placing our fragile reefs and coastlines at risk. Moreover, "eco-grief," the overwhelming emotional response to the destruction of our natural environment, can pose significant mental health challenges, especially across our islands where culture, livelihoods, and a sense of place are deeply tied to the land and ocean.^{3,4}

With sea level rise and warmer oceans, Hawai'i is already witnessing coastal erosion and more extreme weather patterns, compromising critical public health

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>

² https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/archives/measure_indiv_Archives.aspx?billtype=HCR&billnumber=192&year=2023

³ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7830022>

⁴ <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.872544/full>



infrastructure and housing. These impacts also reverberate economically, potentially increasing housing instability, mental health issues, and social inequities. Public health must therefore be at the forefront of any concerted climate action strategy. Declaring climate change to be a public health emergency creates a framework for decisive, coordinated action.

Cross-Sector Coordination is Essential

Addressing climate-related public health risks cannot be left solely to the Department of Health. Because climate change influences factors well beyond the traditional scope of “health”, a cross-sector, inter-departmental approach is the only path to effectively strengthen our public health systems and infrastructure. Agencies overseeing land, water, agriculture, transportation, and emergency services may not typically see themselves as having a health-related mandate, yet their decisions on resource management, urban planning, and disaster preparedness directly shape community health outcomes.

By calling for every department to reflect on its role in mitigating and adapting to climate-health impacts, this resolution fosters a culture shift in which all agencies recognize how their policies and operations can either exacerbate or alleviate public health threats. This proclamation underscores the urgency for holistic action, ensuring that Hawai'i can implement comprehensive solutions to protect residents and develop more resilient infrastructure in the face of an escalating climate crisis.

Building on Hawai'i's History of Leadership

Hawai'i set a precedent by becoming the first state to declare a climate emergency in 2021, underscoring our collective will to confront climate change.⁵ However, that emergency declaration did not explicitly prioritize public health or mobilize necessary health-focused resources. This resolution builds on our established environmental commitments by explicitly addressing the human health dimension, ensuring that community well-being remains at the forefront of climate adaptation and resilience efforts.

By declaring a public health emergency and calling for broad statewide collaboration, HCR 188 / HR 182 affirms Hawai'i's commitment to safeguarding the health of its residents. This resolution is an important step in strengthening our state's capacity to identify, plan for, and implement the cross-sector actions needed to protect our communities from the growing threats posed by climate change.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure and stand with Hawai'i's residents in protecting public health from the climate crisis.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James McCallen".

James McCallen
Director of Community Preparedness and Resilience

⁵https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/archives/measure_indiv_Archives.aspx?billtype=SCR&billnumber=44&year=2021

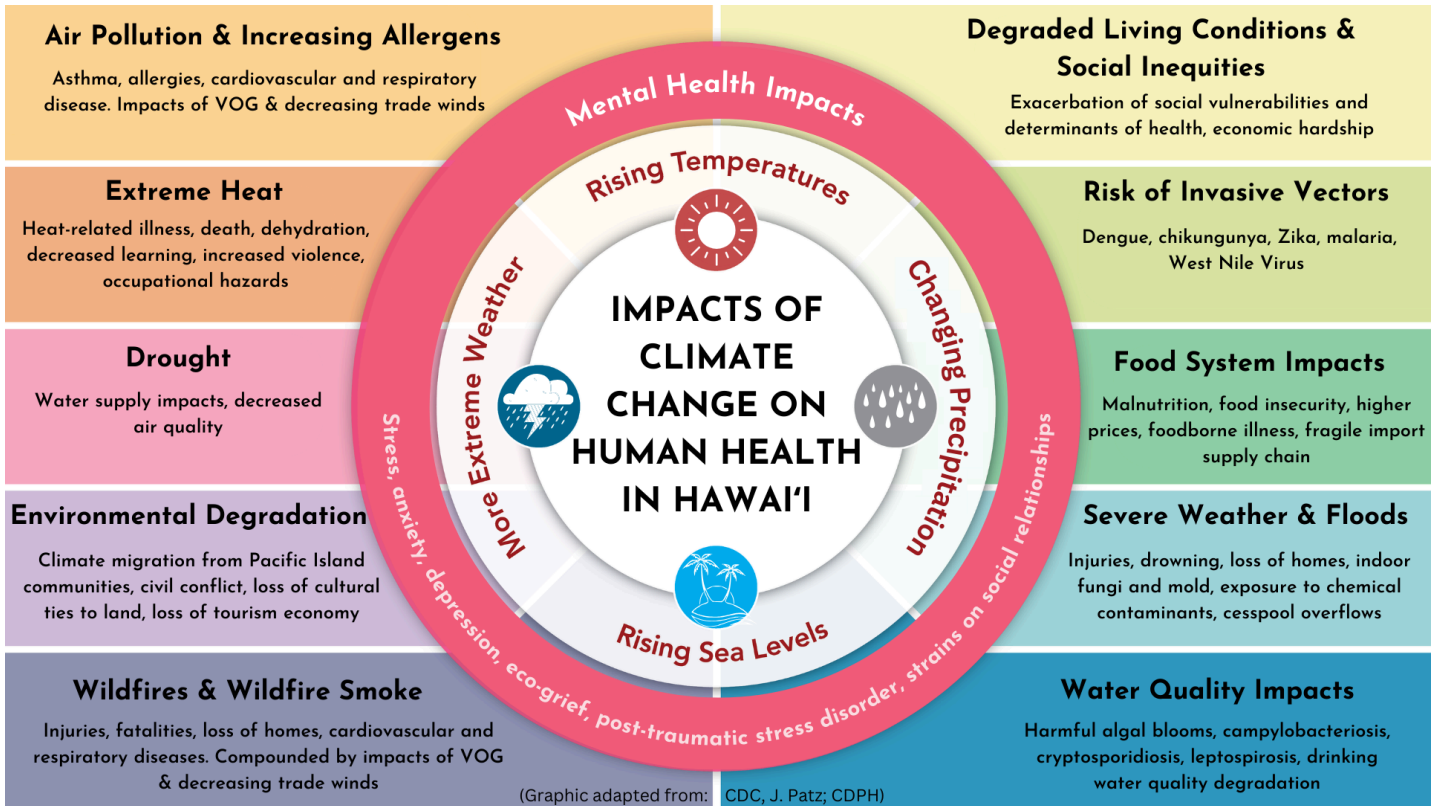


Figure 1. *Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in Hawaii*, Hawaii Department of Health (Adapted from California Department of Public Health and CDC).



House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Testimony on HCR188 / HR182

Relating to a Climate Health Emergency

March 20th, 2025

10:00 AM

Room 325

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) is a cross-sector collaborative interested in strengthening climate and health resiliency in Hawai'i. CCHWG supports this resolution, which urges the State to declare a public health emergency relating to climate change.

Testimony of the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group

In Support of HCR 188 & HR 182

Relating to a Climate Health Emergency

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

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) *strongly supports* HCR188/HR182, a resolution calling for a public health emergency in regards to climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai'i's response.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten the physical and mental health of people across Hawai'i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of "eco-grief" as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the greatest socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a crucial step in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. This declaration directs focus and resources toward vulnerable populations – including keiki, kūpuna, and those living in areas with limited access to healthcare or reliable infrastructure. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. Aligning policies across agencies – from land and water management and urban planning to emergency services – will help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai'i residents.

The Legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications, building on that foundation by urging every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. In doing so, Hawai'i can create robust, preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

The Climate Change & Health Working Group

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 9:55:35 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Mulinix	Greenpeace Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha EEP Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members [Kahaloa, Kusch, Quinlan, Ward](#),

My name is Dave Mulinix CoFounder of Greenpeace Hawaii and on behalf of our thousands of members and supporters statewide we Stand in STRONG SUPPORT of HCR188 - Declaring a public health emergency relating to Climate Change and requesting statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the Climate Crisis.

I am also CoFounder of 350Hawaii, and we were the initiators of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 44 (2021). We recognized the need for the legislature to declare a Climate Emergency because the world, our home, is literally on fire due to increasing global warming. When you realize your home is on fire, then you have to act. When we tried to have a Climate Emergency passed in 2021 we were told that a resolution had no teeth and so would have little impact, but we went ahead anyway, because once the legislature would declare a Climate Emergency then government entities would have to act.

Due to the legislature passing the Climate Emergency, Justice Michael Wilson was able to use this declaration to reject the appeal by Hū Honua Bioenergy, a biomass power plant, effectively closing down this tree-burning project. Justice Thomas Crabtree also used the Climate Emergency to give our 13 Hawaii youth standing for their Constitutional Climate case that was effectively settled out of court in the youth's favor.

This is why we are in strong support of HCR188 because we believe it can also have an effective impact on addressing the growing Climate Crisis.

Mahalo for you kind attention,

Dave Mulinix, CoFounder, Greenpeace Hawaii



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

March 19, 2025

To: Chair Nicole E. Lowen, Vice Chair Amy A. Perruso, and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Date: Thursday, March 20, 2025 **Time:** 10:00 a.m.

Place: Via Videoconference and Conference Room 325

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HR182/HCR188 - Public health emergency relating to Climate change

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

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports HR182/HCR188, which declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and requests statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis.

Key Points in Support:

1. Recognizing the Health Impacts of Climate Change:

- Climate change is already affecting public health in Hawaii through rising temperatures, increased respiratory illnesses due to air pollution, more frequent and severe extreme weather events, and the spread of vector-borne diseases. Declaring a public health emergency acknowledges the urgency of addressing these impacts.

2. Coordinated Statewide Response:

- Addressing the public health challenges posed by climate change requires collaboration across government agencies, the private sector, and community organizations. Statewide coordination will ensure that Hawaii can effectively identify risks, allocate resources, and implement timely solutions.

3. Building Resilience in Vulnerable Communities:

- Communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income residents, indigenous populations, and those in coastal areas, need targeted support to build resilience. This measure promotes equity by creating strategies to protect and uplift these communities.

4. Examples of Current Challenges:

- The increasing frequency of extreme heat events poses serious risks, especially for children, the elderly, and individuals with preexisting conditions.
- The 2023 wildfires and resulting air quality concerns serve as a stark reminder of the intersection between climate events and public health.

5. Proactive Solutions:

- By taking decisive action now, Hawaii can mitigate the worst impacts of climate change on public health. This measure will enable the development of early warning systems, emergency preparedness plans, and innovative solutions that strengthen health systems statewide.

We commend the Legislature for its leadership in addressing the climate crisis and urge the passage of HR182/HCR188 to safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawaii residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

Co-Chairs Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

MARCH 20, 2025

HCR 188/HR 182, DECLARING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND REQUESTING STATEWIDE COORDINATION TO IDENTIFY, PLAN FOR, AND CREATE CROSS-SECTOR SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN HAWAII'S PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

POSITION: SUPPORT

Coalition Earth supports HCR 188/HR 182, which declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and requests statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai'i's public health response to the climate crisis.

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.

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.

Just two years ago, we witnessed the impact of the climate emergency on our shores. On August 8, 2023, wildfires swept across Maui and killed at least 100 people, making it one of the nation's deadliest natural disasters. The spread of the fires has been attributed to climate change conditions, such as unusually dry landscapes and the confluence of a strong high-pressure system

to the north and Hurricane Dora to the south. The wildfires destroyed over 2,200 structures, including numerous residential buildings, historic landmarks, and school facilities. In September 2023, a report from the United States Department of Commerce estimated the total economic damage of the wildfires to be roughly \$5.5 billion. Investing in renewable energy generation could not be more urgent, given the growing threat of climate catastrophes to our island home.

Therefore, **our state should take steps to hasten our transition to a clean energy economy and continue our fight against climate change, including by connecting the climate crisis to public health outcomes.** According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, climate change can exacerbate existing health threats and create new public health challenges. It affects the physical environment, as well as all aspects of natural and human systems, including social and economic conditions and the functioning of health systems.

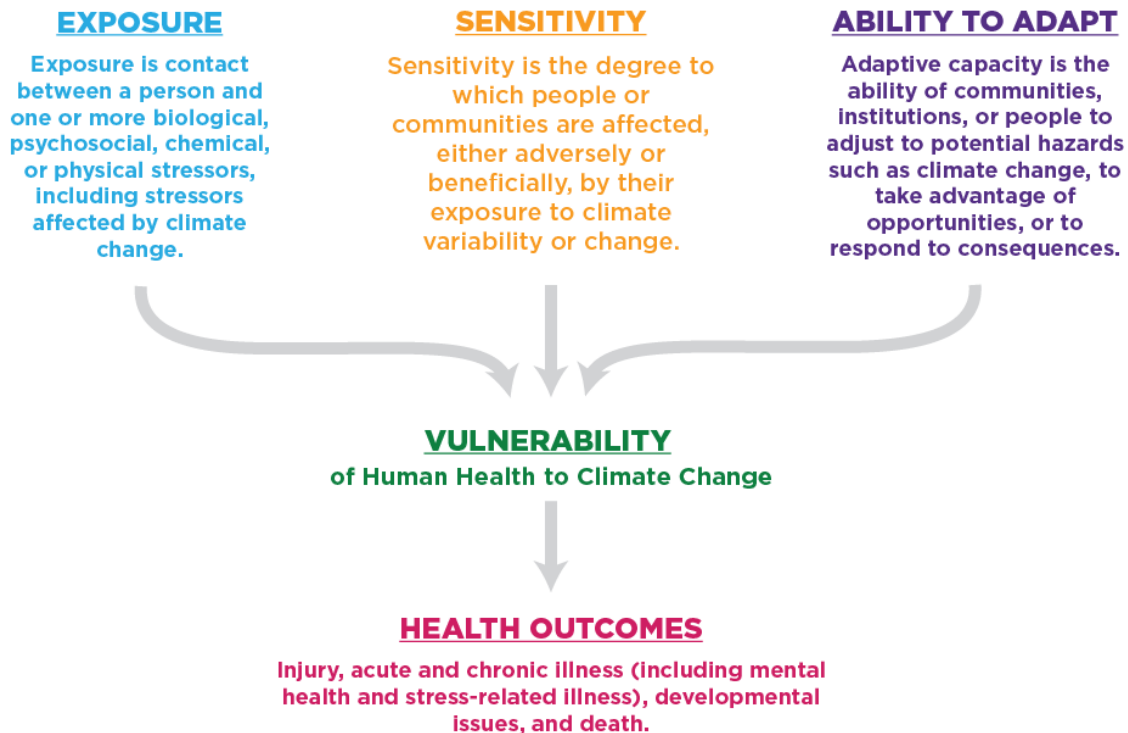


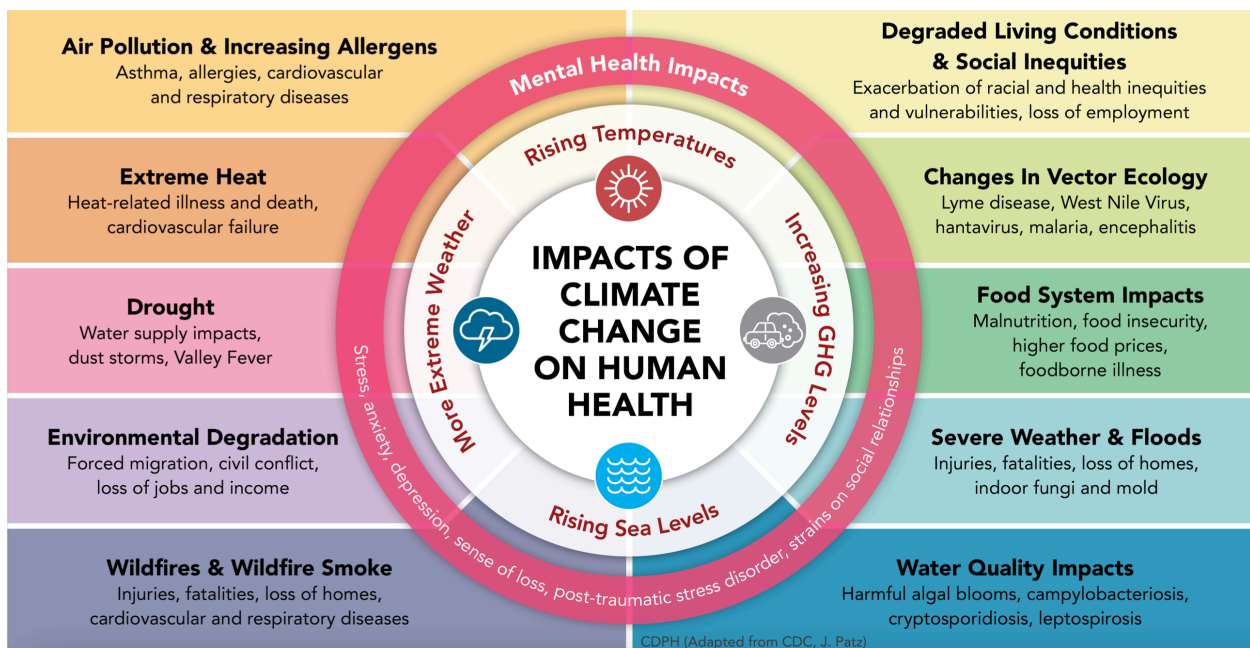
Figure adapted by the EPA from the Global Change Research Program’s 2016 Climate and Health Assessment, illustrating determinants of vulnerability to climate-related health threats.

The World Health Organization calls climate change a “threat multiplier,” that undermines decades of health progress. In a fact sheet published by the WHO on October 12, 2023, the organization stated:

As climatic conditions change, more frequent and intensifying weather and climate events are observed, including storms, extreme heat, floods, droughts and wildfires. These weather and climate hazards affect health both directly and indirectly, increasing the risk

of deaths, noncommunicable diseases, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, and health emergencies.

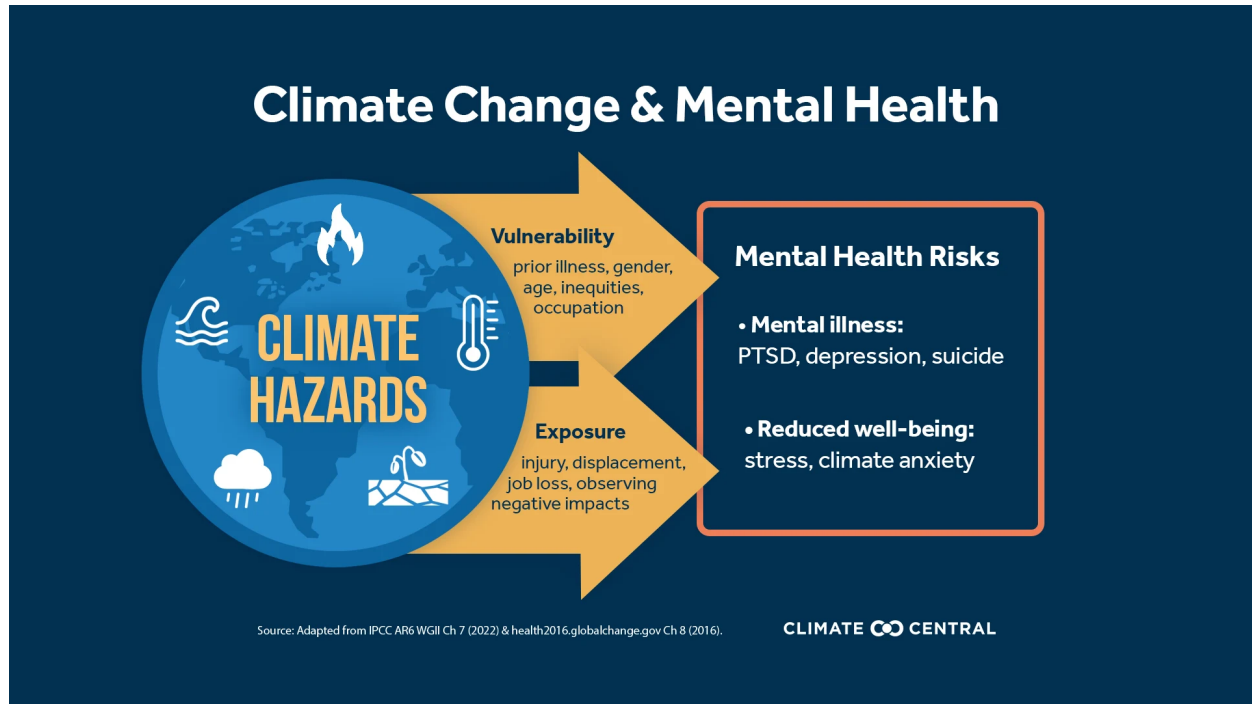
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed the following graphic to highlight the way climate change harms human health through changes in environmental exposures, including more extreme heat and severe weather events, worsened air quality, more frequent wildfires and smoke, increases in allergens, altered environmental conditions that foster the spread of infectious diseases, and other direct and indirect pathways. The resulting human health impacts include increased cases of heat-related illness and death, more air pollution-related cardiovascular and respiratory disease events, increased injury and loss of life due to wildfires, severe storms, and flooding, further occurrences of vector-borne and water-borne illnesses, and mental trauma from loss of livelihoods, property loss, and displacement.



Moreover, populations that already face systemic and economic disadvantages—such as individuals experiencing homelessness, infants and the elderly, pregnant persons, people who manage chronic illnesses, non-able-bodied populations, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and immigrants—are more likely to be adversely impacted by the complex and overlapping consequences of the accelerating climate crisis.

Finally, as the Commonwealth Fund has noted, climate change significantly impacts mental health. In an article entitled “How Climate Change Affects Our Mental Health, and What We Can Do About It,” published on March 29, 2023, the Commonwealth Fund asserted that rising ambient temperatures have already been found to increase rates of mental health-related emergency department visits and that violent incidents and suicide attempts also climb as temperatures rise. Similarly, long-term exposure to air pollution has been associated with elevated anxiety levels and even an increase in suicide rates. Climate change also can raise

stress and anxiety levels for people robbed of their economic livelihoods, as when farmers can no longer grow their crops because of shifting weather patterns that cause frequent drought or flooding. Extreme weather events can also destroy businesses, severely hamper economic activity, and lead to both short- and long-term financial challenges.



Graphic taken from Climate Central, showing the impact of climate change on mental health.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change distinguishes between climate change-related mental health risks that are:

- **Direct:** such as anxiety, depression or PTSD stemming from personal traumas (injury, displacement, or loss of loved ones) sustained during a hurricane;
- **Indirect:** such as stress, substance abuse, or suicidal ideation among individuals whose livelihoods or food security are affected by drought; and
- **Vicarious:** such as anxiety, fear and distress that can affect people when they learn about or perceive climate change risks or witness its harmful impacts on others.

Accordingly, we must recognize the climate crisis as a public health emergency and launch a coordinated response that protects vulnerable communities from its most menacing impacts on our state's health and wellness.

*Coalition Earth is a nongovernmental organization that works to preserve the well-being of people and our planet. We champion policies that advance climate resilience, clean energy, public health, and economic fairness for working families. **Contact us at info@coalitionearth.org.***



To: The House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection (EEP)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2025, 10am

In strong support of HCR188/HR182

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

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HCR188/HR182** that declares a public health emergency relating to climate change and requesting statewide coordination to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis.

Public health is already being impacted by climate change through increased heat, vector-borne diseases, crop failure and food insecurity, water insecurity, waterborne diseases, extreme weather events, air pollution, and adverse mental health impacts. Because we have waited too long to mitigate CO₂ emissions, adverse health impacts will increase in future years. Moreover, our low and moderate-income residents, seniors, and indigenous residents will disproportionately experience these impacts.

Consequently, statewide efforts to actively examine how climate breakdown is impacting human health, and a collaboration of state agencies, local governments, and community organizations to develop a public health strategy to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis are critically needed. Please pass HCR188/HR182 **along with measures that will boldly act to address the root issue creating this problem, our carbon pollution.** While Hawaii has been recognized as a climate leader due to our ambitious renewable energy goals, actual steps towards the necessary actions to achieve those goals has yet to be implemented.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:25:33 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 8:09:16 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 10:55:46 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brianna Diaz, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Brianna, I am a physician resident, and I strongly SUPPORT **HR182/HCR188**, recognizing climate change as a public health emergency and calling for a coordinated effort across the state to engage in solutions.

Climate change is already affecting Hawai‘i’s health—rising temperatures, wildfires, degraded water quality, and extreme weather events increase illness, worsen health disparities, and disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. Beyond physical health, the emotional toll of “eco-grief” is significant as our natural and cultural resources suffer.

Declaring a public health emergency is not just symbolic—it mobilizes resources to protect keiki, kūpuna, and those with limited healthcare access. A unified, statewide approach will strengthen mitigation and adaptation efforts, ensuring policies across all sectors safeguard public health.

Hawai‘i has acknowledged the climate crisis before—this resolution reinforces its urgent public health implications, urging agencies to prioritize human health in decision-making.

The climate crisis is a health crisis, and we can improve the health and well-being of patients by addressing it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

Sincerely,
Brianna Diaz, MD

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 7:13:36 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eli Warren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Eli Warren and I SUPPORT HR 182 / HCR 188, a resolution calling for a public health emergency in regards to climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai‘i’s response.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten the physical and mental health of people across Hawai‘i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of “eco-grief” as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the greatest socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a crucial step in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. This declaration directs focus and resources toward vulnerable populations – including keiki, kūpuna, and those living in areas with limited access to healthcare or reliable infrastructure. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. Aligning policies across agencies – from land and water management and urban planning to emergency services – will help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai‘i residents.

The legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications, building on that foundation by urging every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. In doing so, Hawai‘i can create robust, preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

Eli Warren

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 8:30:04 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawaii **STRONGLY SUPPORT!**

We need to recognize the link between climate heating and public health and plan coordinated responses.

Please pass!

Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 3:49:13 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Kiefer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Elizabeth Kiefer and I SUPPORT HR 182 / HCR 188, a resolution calling for a public health emergency in regards to climate change and calls for coordinated, cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawai‘i’s response.

Climate change is not a distant issue: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions already threaten the physical and mental health of people across Hawai‘i. From heat-related illnesses, threats of wildfires and respiratory issues tied to wildfire smoke, the degradation of water quality and risk of waterborne disease, impacts of more frequent and intense storm events, to the emotional toll of “eco-grief” as our natural and cultural resources are damaged, climate change exacerbates existing health disparities and disproportionately impacts individuals with preexisting health conditions and communities that face the greatest socioeconomic, geographic, or infrastructural barriers to adaptation.

Declaring a public health emergency is more than a symbolic gesture – it is a crucial step in mobilizing resources and action to protect public health. This declaration directs focus and resources toward vulnerable populations – including keiki, kūpuna, and those living in areas with limited access to healthcare or reliable infrastructure. It also recognizes the broad scope of climate impacts, which transcend departmental boundaries and demand a unified, statewide approach. Aligning policies across agencies – from land and water management and urban planning to emergency services – will help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts effectively safeguard the health and well-being of all Hawai‘i residents.

The legislature has previously recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis, but this resolution specifically highlights its public health implications, building on that foundation by urging every state agency to actively examine how their decisions affect human health. In doing so, Hawai‘i

can create robust, preventive strategies that reduce the incidence of climate-related health impacts, protect natural resources, and mitigate the social and economic costs of inaction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kiefer MD MPH