

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 HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: 4/2/2025

Room Number: 329

Fiscal Implications: This measure will not 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 HR0182 and recognizes that the changing climate is a worldwide environmental health problem that directly impacts the health and safety of Hawaii's people, communities, and natural environment. Potential human health effects resulting from climate change are broad reaching and include dangers from increased natural disasters and flooding, changing vector-borne infectious diseases and food related infections, as well as impacts on mental health and well-being. Hawaii has been a national leader in taking steps to increase resilience and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

The need to build out further capacity throughout Hawai'i to address climate change impact to the environment and community resiliency is of the utmost importance. By improving the collaboration of statewide organization to address climate change we will further protect the future of the Hawai'i state community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 11:44:44 AM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Henry Curtis	Life of the Land	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha

Life of the Land strongly supports of HCR 188 / HR 182 to address climate change induced public health resilience

Mahalo



March 31, 2025

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Re: STRONG SUPPORT OF HCR188/HR182 RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Hrg: April 2, 2025 at 10AM

The Hawaii'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawaii'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy.

The Hawaii Public Health Association strongly supports HCR188/HR182. Climate change is not a distant threat. It is already harming the health of Hawai'i's people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support this resolution to ensure that Hawai'i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Holly Kessler' in a cursive script.

Holly Kessler
Executive Director



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

APRIL 2, 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.

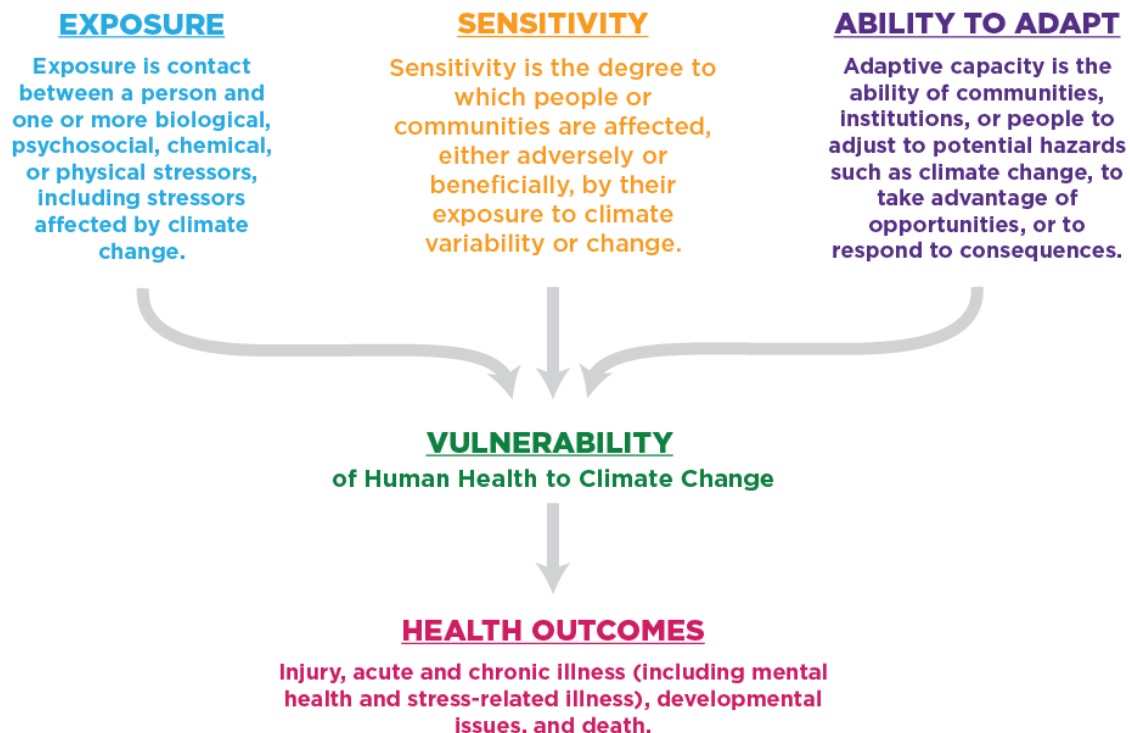


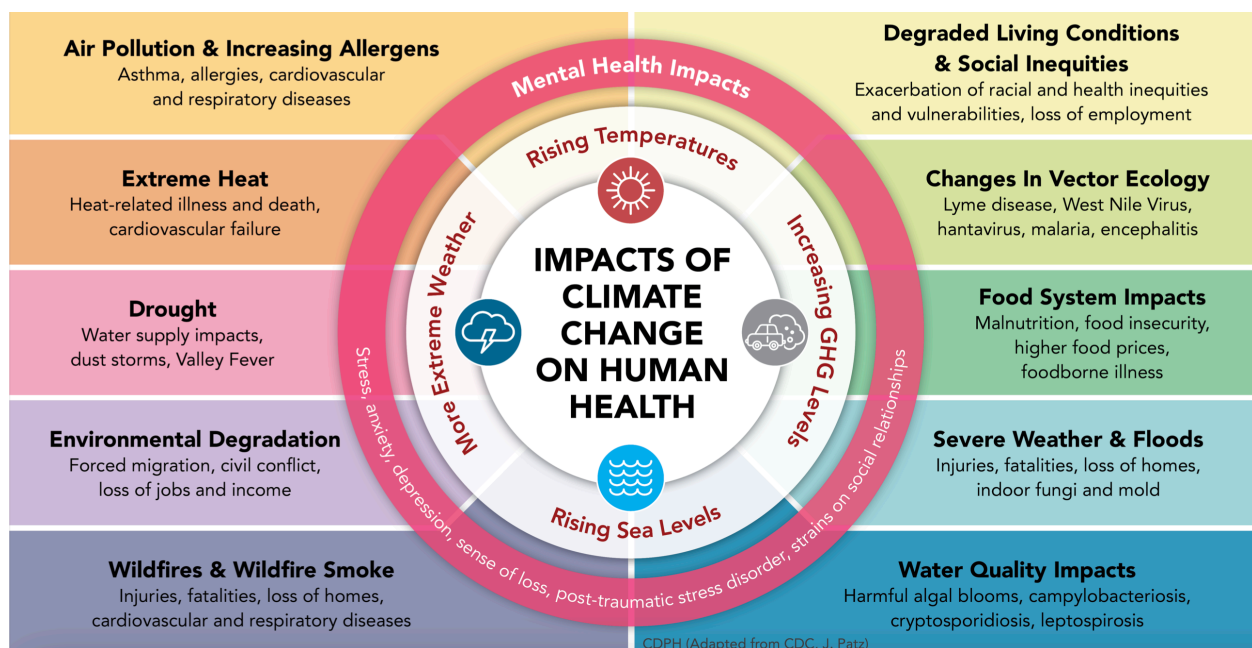
Figure adapted by the EPA from the Global Change Research Program's 2016 Climate and Health Assessment, illustrating determinants of vulnerability to climate-related health threats.

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.

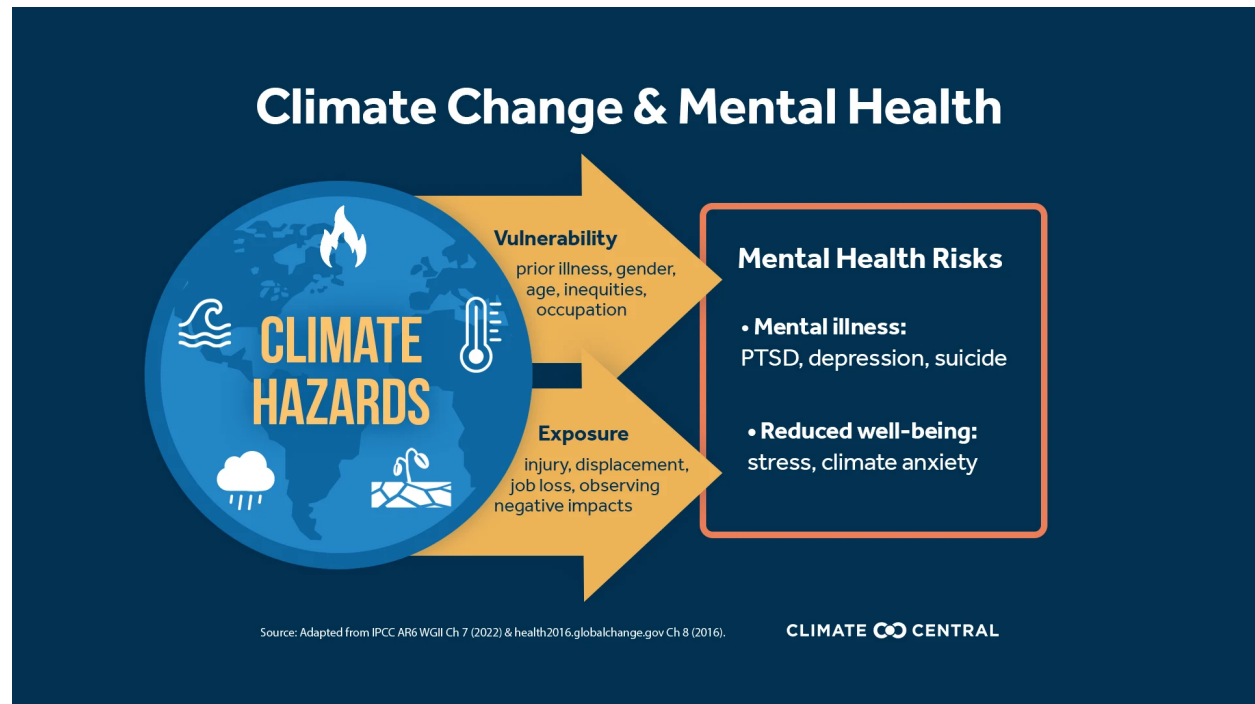
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed the following graphic to highlight the way climate change harms human health through changes in environmental exposures, including more extreme heat and severe weather events, worsened air quality, more frequent wildfires and smoke, increases 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: House Committee on Health (HLT)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10:30am

In strong support of HCR188/HR182

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee, and members of the HLT 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



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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: April 2, 2025

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

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: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 10:30 AM, Conference Room 329

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

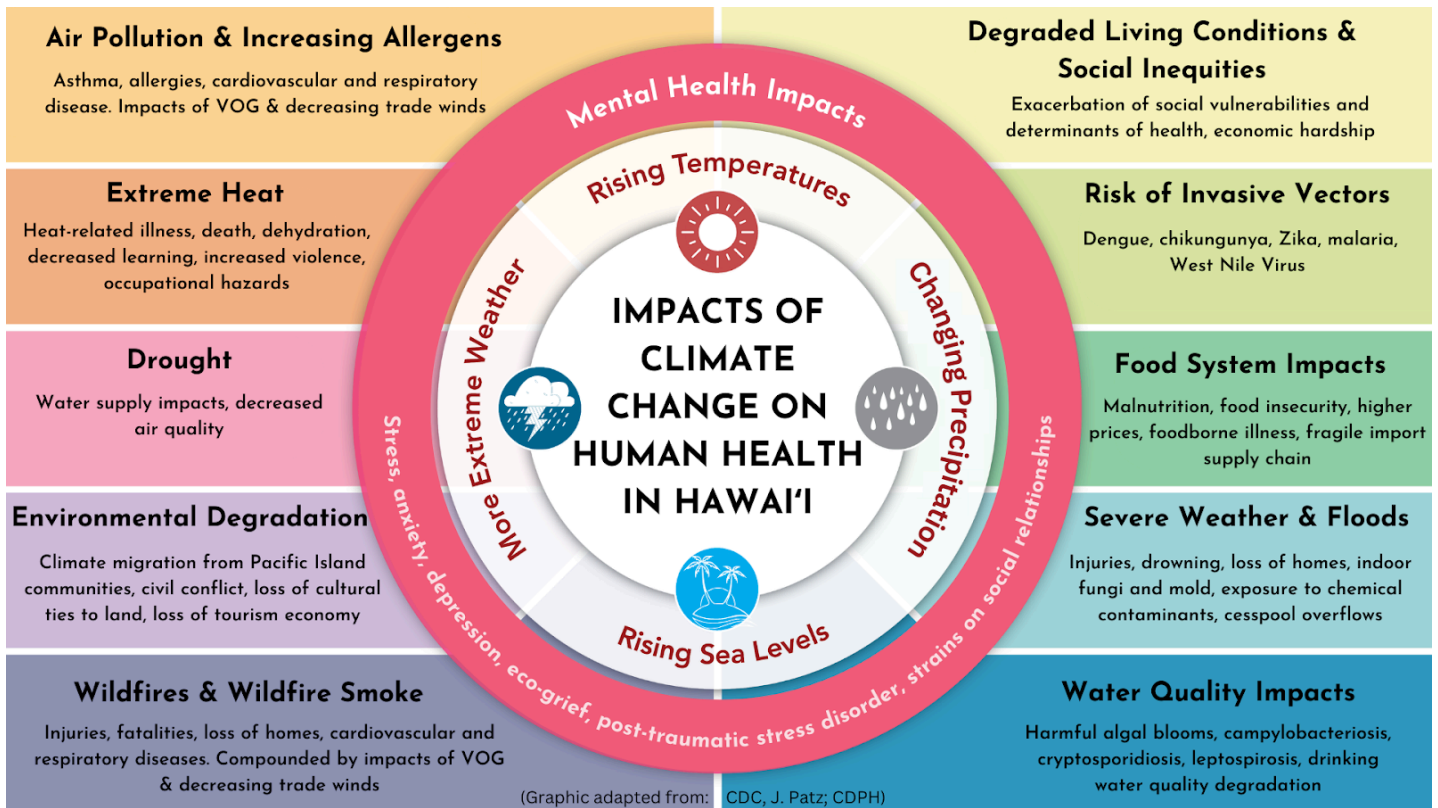


Figure 1. *Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in Hawai'i*, Hawai'i Department of Health (Adapted from California Department of Public Health and CDC).



House Committee on Health

Testimony on HCR188 / HR182

Relating to a Climate Health Emergency

April 2nd, 2025

10:30 AM

Room 329

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 Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, 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: 3/30/2025 8:40:48 AM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, 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.

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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

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:48:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Werner	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Emily Werner 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. I am a student at University of Hawaii Manoa, pursuing a bachelor's degree in sustainability. Through my studies, I have learned how climate change will impact our environment, health, and communities.

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.

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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,

Emily Werner

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:53:27 AM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martina Kamaka	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Martina Kamaka 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.

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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,

Martina Kamaka, MD

Fellow, American Academy of Family Physicians

Vice Chair, National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians

Professor, Department of Native Hawaiian Health, John A. Burns School of Medicine

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:27:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the House Health Committee,

I strongly support 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.

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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.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

Eli Warren

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:05:17 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support. Thank you.

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:08:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Mahealani Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate change is not a distant threat. It is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support this resolution to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis.

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:29:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Climate change is real: Maui's streams are reported to be at 20% of normal so far this year-

Thank you!

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:11:18 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Romaine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for considering my testimony:

Climate change is not a distant threat. It is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support this resolution to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis.

Date: March 31, 2025

To: The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

Re: **Support for HCR188 / HR182**

Hrg: Wednesday April 2, 2025 at 10:30 am via Videoconference Conference Room 329

Aloha House Committee on Health,

Climate change is not just an environmental crisis – it's a **public health emergency**.

Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels threaten everything from food and water security to mental health and economic stability. Vulnerable communities – including kūpuna, keiki, and those with chronic health conditions – are hit hardest by the health impacts of the climate crisis.

By formally recognizing climate change as a public health emergency, Hawai'i can better mobilize resources, foster cross-sector collaboration, and protect the health and wellbeing of everyone across the islands we call home.

Hawai'i has already led the nation by declaring a climate emergency in 2021. This new resolution builds on that leadership by explicitly recognizing the dire impacts of climate change on human health and calling for statewide coordination to strengthen our public health response.

Please support this resolution to ensure that Hawai'i strengthens our community health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis.

I respectfully ask you to **support HCR188 / HR182**.

Many thanks for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 5:13:38 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Reeser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of this proposal. Climate change is not a distant threat—it is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support this measure to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis. Hawai‘i must lead the charge on this issue.

Mahalo for consideration of this critical issue,

Cheryl Reeser
Makawao, Hawai‘i

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 6:22:58 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Recogniz the impact of climate change on human health and call for statewide coordination to strengthen our public health response.

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 6:37:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate change is not a distant threat. It is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support this resolution to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis.

HR-182

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:13:44 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Manali-Leonardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

As an island state we are held hostage to the sea, the wind, the sun, the rain, high surf, earthquakes & volcanos.

We can not escape the reality of weather and other forces of nature.

It would be foolish to believe we will not have weather changes that will not impact of health and food security.

We are in the middle of the sea. We must take care of our citizens. We need funds to do this properly.

Please pass HCR 188 & HR 182.

Mahalo,

Nancy Manali-Leonardo

808-542-1556

96815

HCR188 Testimony

Hannah Canosa, PharmD
Tulane University -MPH Candidate in Disaster Management
Ka'u Rural Health Community Association, Director

120 Makalea Place; Hilo, HI 96720

hcanosa@tulane.edu

March 31, 2025

Hawaii State Legislature Committee on Health
Hawaii State Capitol 415 S. Beretania Street Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Testimony in Support of 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

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee on Health,

As a community pharmacist specializing in Disaster Management, I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed bill to declare a public health emergency relating to climate change in Hawaii. The worsening climate crisis is not only an environmental issue but also an urgent and undeniable public health threat that disproportionately affects our island communities.

Climate change has already begun to exacerbate health conditions across Hawaii. Rising temperatures, increased frequency of hurricanes, wildfires, and flooding events have led to worsening air quality and heat-related stress. Additionally, disruptions in food and water supply due to extreme weather events directly impact nutrition and sanitation, placing vulnerable populations—such as the elderly, children, and those with preexisting conditions—at even greater risk. As a healthcare professional, I have witnessed the effects of climate-related health crises firsthand. Increased emergency room visits for respiratory distress, dehydration, and heatstroke are clear indicators that climate change is already straining our healthcare system.

Beyond its direct health effects, climate change has severely impacted Hawaii's supply chain, making our communities even more vulnerable. As an island state reliant on imports for over 80% of its food and medical supplies, global and local shipping disruptions due to rising sea levels and extreme weather events have led to supply shortages and increased costs. Droughts and hurricanes have affected local agriculture and fisheries, making nutritious food less accessible and exacerbating food insecurity. Damage to critical infrastructure in the continental U.S., such as ports, roads, and airports, further strains supply lines, delaying shipments of essential goods, including medications and medical equipment. Additionally, energy supply disruptions pose a risk to refrigeration and storage of critical healthcare resources, placing patient care at risk during emergencies.

Declaring climate change a public health emergency will allow the state to take critical steps in mitigating these impacts. It will enable policymakers to allocate resources for public health preparedness, enhance emergency response systems, and invest in climate adaptation measures to protect our residents. Furthermore, it will help integrate climate resilience into healthcare planning, ensuring that our medical systems can withstand future environmental challenges.

HCR188 Testimony

Hawaii must take a proactive stance in addressing climate change as a public health crisis. The time to act is now. I urge you to support this bill and commit to protecting the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hannah Canosa, PharmD
Tulane University – MPH in Disaster Management Candidate (Class of 2026)
East Hawai'i Health Pharmacy – Pharmacist
Ka'u Rural Health Community Association, Inc – Director
hcanosa@tulane.edu
(808) 430-8518

HR-182

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 9:31:15 AM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Ogata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the Committee on Health:

Please support HCR188/HR182 declaring climate change a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies. I am a healthcare provider and received my Masters in Public Health. This resolution helps ensure our most vulnerable residents are protected as climate change is harming our public health through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity and mental health stress, to name a few. Climate change is happening now and we need to scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities.

Again, please support this resolution to ensure Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis. Our kupuna are concerned not only about their own health, but the health impacts of climate change on future generations. We must fundamentally change our politics and priorities to put the health of our communities and planet first.

Shelly Ogata, RN, MPH

HR-182

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:05:55 PM

Testimony for HLT on 4/2/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate change is not a distant threat. It is already harming the health of Hawai‘i’s people through extreme heat, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, mental health stress, and more. By declaring a public health emergency and urging coordination across state agencies, this resolution helps ensure that we protect our most vulnerable residents, scale up existing public health systems to better respond to climate impacts, safeguard critical resources, and build resilient communities. Please support this resolution HCR188/HR182 to ensure that Hawai‘i strengthens our public health systems and fosters the cross-sector collaboration necessary to address the climate and health crisis.