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OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

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

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 1:05 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of  
**SB 677**  
**RELATING TO A CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAN.**

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

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **strongly supports SB 677**,  
which requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to develop and publish a statewide  
Climate Adaptation and Resilience Implementation Plan.

As an island state, Hawai'i faces immediate and escalating threats from climate change,  
including infrastructure damage, economic disruptions, and ecosystem degradation. While various  
adaptation plans exist at different scales, **there is currently no comprehensive statewide climate  
adaptation plan** that assesses the overall financial risk and exposure of the entire state associated with  
climate change.

Climate change poses significant financial risks to Hawai'i, including damage to infrastructure  
and communities, loss of tourism revenue, and impacts on agriculture and fisheries. Additionally,  
Hawai'i's unique ecosystems and biodiversity are at risk due to climate change.

Our State's nationally awarded climate and sustainability strategic action plan, the [Hawai'i 2050  
Sustainability Plan](#), recommends the need to develop a statewide climate adaptation and resilience  
implementation plan, as detailed on page 102, Strategy 17. A Statewide Climate Adaptation Plan is  
essential for strengthening Hawai'i's resilience by identifying climate-vulnerable areas, aligning and  
enhancing disaster preparedness, estimating asset loss, and informing risk-based infrastructure  
development. It will establish an official, proactive framework to reduce risks, minimize economic  
disruptions, and ensure long-term stability by integrating climate resilience into state planning and  
investment decisions. This can safeguard lives, protect local industries, and strengthen Hawai'i's natural  
and cultural heritage against the growing threats posed by climate change.

The urgency for action is reinforced by national trends. By late 2024, U.S. agencies intensified  
their response to climate risks, following the Department of Treasury's Financial Stability Oversight

Council (FSOC) guidance on climate risk.<sup>1</sup> This focus has sharpened on strengthening climate risk disclosures and assessing financial impacts. Similarly, Moody's recently increased its scrutiny in its credit rating evaluations, reviewing U.S. agencies and certain states for climate related financial risks and adaptation plans—marking a pivotal shift toward holding governments accountable for their financial exposure and climate adaptation efforts.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that climate change is not a distant threat—it is happening now, and Hawai'i must act decisively with climate adaptations now.

**OPSD Requests the following amendments to this bill:**

- Expanding the plan's deadline by one year due to severe staffing limitations, on Page 4, lines 1-2: “than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of [2027] 2028.”
- Deleting the requirement to update the plan every five years thereafter, on Page 4, lines 2-4: “of 2027. [~~and submit updates of the Hawaii climate adaptation and resilience implementation plan every five years thereafter.~~”]

OPSD supports the initial \$500,000 allocation to develop a statewide Climate Adaptation and Resilience Implementation Plan, along with additional funding to hire the necessary staff outlined in SB 677 to expand the Statewide Sustainability Branch within OPSD, beyond its sole current employee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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<sup>1</sup> Financial Stability Oversight Council. (2024). *Annual report 2024*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/261/FSOC2024AnnualReport.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Moody's. December 18, 2024. *ESG view*. Moody's. Retrieved from <https://www.moodys.com/web/en/us/esgview.html>



### **Testimony on SB 677**

**February 12th, 2025**

**1:05pm**

**Room 229**

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 measure's goal of developing and publishing a Hawaii climate adaptation and resilience implementation plan.

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

#### **In Support of SB 677**

#### **RELATING TO A CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Inouye, Vice Chair Richards and Elefante, and Members of the Water and Land/Agriculture and Environmental Committee:

The Climate Change and Health Working Group supports SB 677's goal of developing and publishing a Hawaii climate adaptation and resilience implementation plan.

This bill aligns with state and county climate and sustainability plans in order to meet Hawaii's goal of adapting to the climate crisis that already affects our state. Sea level rise, increased air and sea temperatures, and more extreme weather are already here. It is imperative that we outline specific measures to adapt to these changes. We support the collection of accurate climate data, the assessment of financial risk, and the recommendations for adaptation to multiple hazards.

Specifically, section 2.4 recommends land use, development and infrastructure adaptations to protect economies, environment and community well-being.

We would like to reiterate to the committee that community well-being is health: the climate crisis is a health crisis. Wildfire smoke threatens respiratory and cardiovascular health and

targets vulnerable keiki, kūpuna, and pregnant women. Schools and buildings need to keep people cool. Wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding bring mortality, injuries and morbidity from critical infrastructure failures. Rising seas leach contaminants and bacteria from our soils and overflowing streams and put people into contact with viral, bacterial and parasitic infections.

We need critical, detailed land use, development, and infrastructure adaptations to protect our families, loved ones, and neighbors.

The climate crisis is a health crisis. We urge to support SB 677.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

The Climate Change and Health Working Group



**SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND  
and AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRAURY 12, 2025**

**SB 677, RELATING TO A CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Coalition Earth **supports** SB 677, relating to adaptation pathways planning, which requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to develop and publish a Hawai'i climate adaptation and resilience implementation plan and updates to the plan every five years.

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 accelerate our transition to a clean energy economy and continue our fight against climate change, including by strengthening our climate adaptation and managed retreat plans.** The term “managed retreat” refers to the relocation of infrastructure, people, and communities away from areas that are especially vulnerable to sea level rise and, in some cases, into areas that are outside of likely inundation zones.

Researchers from the University of Hawai‘i and planners have called for the articulation of a statewide policy on managed retreat that is based on the public trust doctrine and existing shoreline management policies. In an article for the American Planning Association entitled “At What Point Managed Retreat?: Takeaways from the 2023 Managed Retreat Conference,” academics and professional planners jointly stated:

*Such a statement could promote a proactive and equitable approach to climate adaptation and retreat from vulnerable areas, putting the benefit of the public ahead of protecting private property...the policy should emphasize alternatives to buyouts, with the possible exception of cases where there are multiple benefits to the public that are clearly articulated, such as expanding parklands and natural areas to buffer communities from flooding and erosion. **A statewide position on managed retreat and how it fits into the state’s climate adaptation strategy would provide much-needed alignment to enable difficult conversations and decisions around retreat to move forward.***

We are in the midst of a crisis, with our planet reaching record temperatures with each passing year. In 2024—the hottest year on record according to NASA, with a global surface temperature that was 2.32 °F (1.29°C) above the 20th-century average—sea levels rose by 111 millimeters, more than the rate of rise in the previous 30 years. As the climate emergency continues to worsen, we must take immediate action to protect our communities.

*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](mailto:info@coalitionearth.org).*



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

February 12, 2025

1:05 PM

Conference Room 229

**In SUPPORT of SB677: RELATING TO A CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

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Aloha Chair Inouye, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS SB677**, which would require the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) to develop and publish a Hawai'i Climate Adaptation and Resilience Implementation Plan (implementation plan). While Hawai'i has done well with adopting various goals and plans towards achieving a livable climate future, this implementation plan will provide a much needed, centralized source of information and recommendations for action, to help us all navigate our way through an ever worsening climate crisis.

Climate projections have made it abundantly clear that Hawai'i must account for the anticipated impacts of climate destabilization in our decisionmaking. Fortunately, Hawai'i's unique geographical location; 'ike kūpuna that provided for Hawai'i's inhabitants over the last millenia; and many important findings and research led by Hawai'i's own climate experts; present a wealth of resources that can be activated to guide our decisions and safeguard our islands and our future generations in the extremely uncertain times to come. The proposed implementation plan is one opportunity to take advantage of these resources in a comprehensive and systemic manner.

The Sierra Club also notes that OPSD's Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan further recommends the development of an implementation plan, as proposed in this measure.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committees to **PASS** SB677. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



February 11, 2025

To: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT OF SB677 RELATING TO A CLIMATE ADAPTATION  
AND RESILIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Hrg: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 1:05pm

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health.

HPHA supports HB380 HD1 and its goal of developing and publishing a Hawaii climate adaptation and resilience implementation plan.

This bill aligns with state and county climate and sustainability plans in order to meet Hawaii's goal of adapting to the climate crisis that already affects our state. Sea level rise, increased air and sea temperatures, and more extreme weather are already here. It is imperative that we outline specific measures to adapt to these changes. I support the collection of accurate climate data, the assessment of financial risk, and the recommendations for adaptation to multiple hazards.

Specifically, section 2.4 recommends land use, development and infrastructure adaptations to protect economies, environment and community well-being.

I would like to reiterate to the committee that community well-being is health: the climate crisis is a health crisis. Wildfire smoke threatens respiratory and cardiovascular health and targets vulnerable keiki, kūpuna, and pregnant women. Schools and buildings need to keep people cool. Wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding bring mortality, injuries and morbidity from critical infrastructure failures. Rising seas leach contaminants and bacteria from our soils and overflowing streams and put people into contact with viral, bacterial and parasitic infections.

We need critical, detailed land use, development, and infrastructure adaptations to protect our families, loved ones, and neighbors.

The climate crisis is a health crisis. I urge to support SB677

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

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler  
Executive Director





SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
WATER AND LAND  
and  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

February 12, 2025, 1:05 PM  
Room 229 & Videoconference

**LATE**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 677

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

American Flood Coalition (AFC) appreciates the opportunity to express its **support for SB 677**, Relating to a climate adaptation and resilience implementation plan. AFC is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit coalition that drives transformational adaptation to protect communities from higher seas, stronger storms, and more frequent flooding. AFC comprises more than 450 elected officials, local leaders, municipalities, civic and military groups, and businesses that work together to advance flood solutions at the local, state, and federal levels.

We applaud the Hawai'i legislature taking this impressive step to prepare the state for future hazards, including flooding, by developing a strategic plan. In our work across the county, we have seen that states with strategic resilience plans do a better job of directing resources where they will have the greatest impact. With a plan in place that assesses risk and then prioritizes projects, programs, and policies, these states more effectively draw down federal funding and deploy resources to get resilience projects in the ground faster. Through SB 677, Hawai'i will set its communities up for success by implementing proven approaches that include mobilizing the full force of state government in a single strategy with clear goals, grounding the plan in forward-looking data, and including implementation metrics to define progress. In addition to this, we encourage the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) to support underserved communities and incorporate community feedback throughout the plan's drafting process.

Crucially, SB 677 provides funding for dedicated staff to maintain momentum on this plan. For the people and economy of Hawai'i, there is an inestimable value of a climate adaptation and resilience implementation plan, and having a dedicated team of professionals to create the plan—with community input—will set the state up for long-term success.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this effort to make Hawai'i more resilient.

Respectfully,

**Anne Brody**  
State Government Relations Director

**SB-677**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:25:59 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Hawaii faces significant and unique challenges from climate change. We've got to be well prepared, agile, and adaptive to ongoing and coming climate disruptions. I believe this reporting requirement will keep our officials honest about the costs, decisions, and work needed to successfully adapt to climate change.

Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance!

I urge this Committee to SUPPORT this bill!