

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

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Friday, April 11, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

in consideration of
SCR51

**REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE ESTABLISHMENT AND
ADMINISTRATIVE PLACEMENT OF AN OFFICE OF RESILIENCE AND
RECOVERY.**

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** and **offers** **amendments** to SCR51, which requests OPSD to convene a working group to evaluate the establishment and administrative placement of an Office of Resilience and Recovery.

The challenges experienced since the Maui wildfires in August 2023, and increasing frequency and intensity of disasters due to climate change, clearly demonstrate the urgent need to strengthen the State's resilience and preparedness for future disasters. Establishing a permanent Office of Resilience and Recovery will ensure the State has the ability to provide leadership and coordination to help the State better prepare for, and recover from, future disasters.

As OPSD does not currently have capacity to provide the necessary staffing to support the proposed 15-member working group, we request that \$36,000 in general funds be added to HB300, BED144, to fund one temporary exempt Planning Analyst position for six months, or so much as may be necessary.

OPSD further recommends revising the working group membership by naming the Mayor of each county, or the Mayor's designee, in place of the County civil defense agencies as listed on page 3, lines 1-12. This would allow each County greater flexibility to determine the appropriate representative assigned to long-term resilience. The companion House Concurrent Resolution and House Resolution (HCR64 HD1 /HR58 HD1) adopted this change.

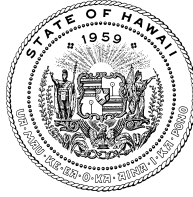
The recommended language is as follows:

SCR51 REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE
ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE PLACEMENT OF AN OFFICE OF
RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY - SUPPORT
State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
April 9, 2025

- (11) ~~The Director of the Department of Emergency Management~~ The Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, or the Director's Mayor's designee;
- (12) ~~The Administrator of the Maui Emergency Management Agency,~~
The Mayor of the County of Maui, or the ~~Administrator's~~
Mayor's designee;
- (13) ~~The Administrator of the Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency,~~
The Mayor of the County of Hawaii, or the ~~Administrator's~~ Mayor's designee;
- (14) ~~The Administrator of the Kauai Emergency Management Agency,~~
The Mayor of the County of Kauai, or the ~~Administrator's~~
Mayor's designee; and

OPSD stands ready to participate and assist the working group, provided that sufficient funds are appropriated for staff support and funding does not adversely impact Administration priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Friday, April 11, 2025

10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 423 and Videoconference

With Support

S.C.R No. 51, Relating to a Working Group for an Office of Resilience and Recovery

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology:

The Office of the Governor Recovery and Resiliency Unit supports S.C.R No. 51, Relating to a Working Group for an Office of Resilience and Recovery.

The increasing frequency and severity of major disasters, coupled with the realities of a changing climate, underscore the urgent need for sustained coordination in long term recovery and resiliency efforts. The aftermath of 2018's multiple disasters, COVID-19, 2021 flooding incidents, and the 2023 Maui wildfires, has resulted in a profound impact to lives, homes, infrastructure, and the state's natural resources which should high the importance of proactive recovery and resiliency coordination and planning.

We support that the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) lead this effort, with appropriate resources allocated to coordinate. By positioning the working group under OPSD, Hawaii will be better equipped to implement recovery and resiliency as core components to statewide planning. Additionally, including the State Disaster Recovery Coordinator along with other agencies ensures alignment with broader State priorities and enables more integrated recovery strategies that account for long term resiliency. To further strengthen this collaborative effort, we suggest that the working group referenced on page 2, remain focused on its core purpose - advancing recovery and resiliency.

The Office of Recovery and Resiliency, HI-ORR, a temporary office attached to the Office of Governor is dedicated and committed to providing comprehensive support to the people of Hawai'i in the aftermath of disasters, as well as helping them becoming prepared before disaster strikes. HI-ORR recognizes that an all-hands approach in helping impacted communities and that no one agency's program can enable a community to fully recover.

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There is tremendous value in a permanent office that is dedicated to the community, businesses, and to our state of Hawai'i to ensure proper recovery and resiliency.

HI-ORR is involved with multiple efforts with many partners supporting the Maui Wildfires including: Administering the Hawai'i Housing Interim Program (HIHP); Tracking Long-term Recovery Projects and Fiscal investments; Coordinating a State Permitting Workgroup; and Producing a State capabilities Assessment and a State Recovery Strategy. HI-ORR also has the responsibility of maintaining and updating the State Recovery Operations Plan. This work and related insights support the groundwork for long-term recovery and resiliency by providing stability to the State for future incidents.

The proposed S.C.R. 51 is a critical step toward building more resilient communities – before, during, and after a disaster. We have a collective responsibility to support one another, and this resolution represents meaningful progress towards that goal.

If you have any questions on this testimony please contact Luke Meyers, Branch Chief HI-ORR and State Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Maui Wildfires for further information and a dialog on this proposal during the legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this resolution.