

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT GOVERNOR



## Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority

An Agency of the State of Hawaii

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
CHAIR

GWEN S YAMAMOTO LAU  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Testimony of Gwen Yamamoto Lau

Executive Director

### Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority

before the

### House Committee on Water & Land

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 9:40 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411

in consideration of

### House Concurrent Resolution No. 64 / House Resolution No. 58

### 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 Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HCR 64 / HR 58 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. The Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority **supports** these resolutions.

Serving as a member of the Climate Advisory Team (CAT) over the past six months has heightened my awareness of the devastating impacts of disasters and underscored the importance of investing in pre-disaster preparedness to mitigate future losses and long-term recovery.

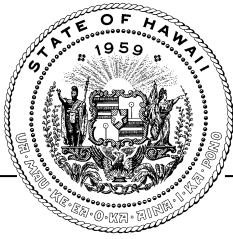
One of the recommendations in the CAT's Policy Recommendations on Climate Disaster, Resilience, Recovery and Funding is to establish a permanent Office of Resilience and Recovery (ORR) to provide the necessary leadership and coordination of a strategic, integrated approach to improve Hawai'i's resilience and preparedness for disasters.

The CAT envisions that a permanent ORR would work hand-in-hand with HI-EMA and other agencies and offices (including the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism Office of Planning and Sustainable Development) to ensure resilience is a top priority. The ORR would serve as a centralized hub, coordinating efforts across state agencies, the four counties, private organizations and community groups to build a more disaster-ready Hawai'i and lead a comprehensive review of the state's critical systems vulnerabilities and implement plans to address these vulnerabilities. The office would also support community-based programs like a home retrofit initiative, resilience hub development, Firewise community implementation, an annual disaster-readiness conference, and long-term resilience planning, focusing on equitable solutions for vulnerable communities.

The CAT specifically did not opine on the placement of the ORR since this decision is best made by the Governor and Legislature. This working group will play a critical role in this important decision.

HGIA defers to OPSD on implementation requirements and other recommendations.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HCR 64 / HR 58.



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

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Tuesday, March 25, 2025  
09:40 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

in consideration of  
**HCR64**

**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 Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** and **offers amendments** to HCR64, 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.

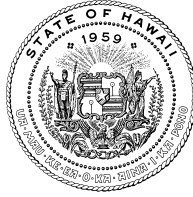
As OPSD does not currently have capacity to provide the necessary staffing to support the proposed 15-member working group, we request that \$36,000 in general funds be added to HB300, BED144, to fund one temporary exempt Planning Analyst position for six months, or so much as may be necessary.

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.

HCR 64 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  
March 25, 2025

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

**House Committee on Water and Land**

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

9:40 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Videoconference

**With Support**

**H.C.R No. 64 / H.R. No. 58, Relating to a Working Group for an Office of Resilience and Recovery**

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land:

The Office of the Governor Recovery and Resiliency Unit supports H.C.R No. 64 and H.R. No. 58, Relating to a Working Group for an Office of Resilience and Recovery.

The Office of Recovery and Resiliency (HI-ORR) offers a proposed amendment to the language in the resolutions on pages 2 and 3, parts 11 - 14, recommending that county representatives include their lead for recovery and resiliency. This will ensure that recovery and resiliency collaboration is fully integrated across all levels. Furthermore, we suggest that the working group in the resolutions on pages 1 and 2, should remain focused on its core purpose - with intent on recovery and resiliency. With support that OPSD lead this effort, there should be appropriate resources to coordinate these activities.

Recent large disasters and a dynamic climate related hazard environment have reinforced the need for long-term recovery and resiliency coordination. In the years following the 2018 Disasters (flooding, lava, tropical systems), COVID-19 Disaster, 2021 Flooding (spring and winter), and the 2023 Wildfires, the losses and impacts to life, homes, property, infrastructure, businesses, and natural and cultural resources should compel the State of Hawai'i to plan effectively for recovery and expand our capacity and capability in resiliency. Furthermore the potential changes to federal funding, including those from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, provide the opportunity for the State of Hawai'i to take a leadership role in these functions.

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

Testimony of Office of the Governor  
H.C.R No. 64 and H.R. No. 58  
March 25, 2025  
Page 2

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. 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 H.C.R No. 64 and H.R. No. 58 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.



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

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

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

**Testimony of  
LEAH LARAMEE  
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of  
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Co-Chair Mary Alice Evans and  
Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang**

**Before the House Committee on  
WATER AND LAND**

**Tuesday, March 25, 2025  
9:40 AM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 64  
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.**

House Concurrent Resolution 64 requests 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. The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) **supports** this measure.

The Commission urges providing funding and capacity to support State agencies in planning and implementing actions that assess risk and vulnerabilities to natural and built infrastructure. This resolution will help dedicate additional capacity for resilience and recovery efforts in the face of climate shocks.

The devastating fires of Lahaina, a singular event exacerbated by climate change, is expected to cost over \$12 billion dollars. Skyrocketing insurance premiums and mass exodus from insurance agents in vulnerable areas are a clear indication that we can no longer ignore the costly impacts of climate. A 2024 study shows that every \$1 spent on climate resilience and preparedness saves communities \$13 in damages, cleanup costs and economic impact. An investment into climate mitigation and resilience is an investment into our people, economy and future.

The Climate Commission recognizes that climate change and sea level rise will intensify the impacts of disastrous events including hurricanes and tsunamis, as well as extreme high-wave and rainfall events. The more thoroughly that recovery issues can be contemplated in advance, the greater will be the efficiency and quality of post-disaster decision-making, which will then lead to more resilient community recovery.

While emergency responders plan for, practice, and respond to save lives and restore critical infrastructure immediately following a disastrous event, county and state planners together with communities must address how to prepare for longer-term disaster recovery in a manner that is efficient and equitable, improves community resilience, and protects the environment.

With federal initiatives to move disaster response to state and county levels, additional resources and capacity are needed. The proposed new office will support counties, state agencies and communities to ensure long term resilience to climate shocks is prioritized and implemented as its central function.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



# Hawai'i Climate Advisory Team

To: Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Rep. Rachele F. Lamosao, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Water and Land

From: The Climate Advisory Team

**HR58/HCR64 - 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**

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 9:40 a.m., Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify **in support of HR58 and HCR64** 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. As members of the Governor's Climate Advisory Team (CAT), we strongly believe a permanent resilience office is essential for providing the necessary leadership and coordination of a strategic, integrated approach to improve Hawai'i's resilience and preparedness for disasters.

The CAT appreciates the importance of determining the most strategic and effective placement of an Office of Resilience and Recovery. We support establishing a working group of key stakeholders to evaluate the best administrative placement of the state resilience office. Once the office is established, we strongly recommend that the head of the resilience office report directly to the Governor, even if the office is attached to another department.

Both the temporary Hawai'i Office of Recovery and Resiliency (HI-ORR) and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) have elements of resilience in their missions. The CAT finds that responsibility for resilience planning and implementation should reside clearly in one department or office that leads state efforts, coordinates and collaborates with county and community representatives, and ensures a vigorous amplified daily focus on statewide resilience.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee in support of HR58 and HCR64.

With aloha,

The Climate Advisory Team



**BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY  
KA 'OIHANA WAI  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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MANAGER AND CHIEF ENGINEER  
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ERWIN KAWATA  
DEPUTY MANAGER  
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EDWIN H. SNIFFEN, Ex-Officio  
GENE C. ALBANO, P.E., Ex-Officio

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
and Members  
House Committee on Water and Land  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 411  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Hashem and Members:

Subject: HCR 64 / HR 58: 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

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) supports House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 64, House Resolution (HR) 58, which requests 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

Unfortunately, the Maui wildfire disaster will not be the last disaster the State of Hawai'i will experience, so we should prepare for future disasters now. State and county agencies should be fully integrated across all levels. In the aftermath of the Maui wildfires, the temporary Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR) attached to the Office of the Governor was instrumental in providing comprehensive support to the victims of the Maui wildfires.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCE 64 / HR 58.

Very truly yours,

ERNEST Y. W. LAU, P.E.  
Manager and Chief Engineer



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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March 23, 2025

**To:** House Committee on Water and Land  
Hon. Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Hon. Rachele F. Lamosao, Vice Chair

**Subject:** HCR 64/HR 58 - 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

**Hearing:** Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 9:40 a.m. Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

**Position:** **Strong Support**

Aloha, Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee!

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i **strongly supports HCR 64/HR 58**, which aim toward creating of a distinct office that would focus on resilience and recovery after natural and human-caused disasters.

As the Resolutions note, “the Climate Advisory Team acknowledged that while the temporary Hawaii Office of Recovery and Resiliency and Hawaii Emergency Management Agency have elements of resilience in their missions, the responsibility for resilience planning and implementation should reside clearly in one department.”

We have seen more than enough delay, waste of money, and probably avoidable distress in the very slow recovery from the Lahaina fires of now 18 months ago. We need to do much better, both in terms of avoiding such disasters and in recovering from them when they happen.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

Alan B. Burdick and Melodie Aduja  
Co-Chairs of the Environmental Caucus of the  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i  
[Burdick808@gmail.com](mailto:Burdick808@gmail.com) [legislativepriorities@gmail.com](mailto:legislativepriorities@gmail.com)

**HCR-64**

Submitted on: 3/23/2025 2:13:45 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/25/2025 9:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for considering this timely and thoughtful measure.