

Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission

Background and Draft Statement/Proposed Addendum on Improving Disaster Recovery Preparedness

The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation 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.

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program in partnership with the State Department of Natural Resources and Office of Planning recently completed *Guidance for Disaster Recovery Preparedness in Hawai'i* (Guidance) to assist State and county governments in establishing resilience-focused recovery practices and policies before a disaster strikes to enable communities to recover quickly while also adapting to climate change and sea level rise. The Guidance was developed through consultations and workshops with federal, state, and county agencies around Hawai'i and subject matter experts around the country.

The Guidance and companion *Guidance for Addressing Coastal Hazards and Sea Level Rise in Community Planning* (in development, due April 2020) are examples of the interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration and resulting tools needed to prepare the State for climate change and sea level rise and form a critical next step towards a Climate Ready Hawaii.

At its September 2018 meeting, the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Climate Commission) adopted a mission statement that recognizes the urgency of climate threats and the need to act quickly in a manner that is **clean, equitable and resilient**.

Recognizing that disasters threaten our resiliency, the Commission proposes to add a new strategy to its five-point statement on sea level rise adaptation at its July 17, 2019 meeting, namely:

“Strongly encourage State and county agencies to strengthen and expand pre-disaster recovery plans and policies that incorporate opportunities to adapt to climate change and sea level rise through disaster recovery.”¹

¹ The full statement on sea level rise can be viewed in the press release here: <http://climate.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NR-State-Climate-Commission-Adopts-Recommendations-Mission-Statement-Sept.-5-2018.pdf>, and contains the following strategies: Support legislation for disclosure for private property and public offerings located in areas with potential exposure to sea level rise. • Request all new development, redevelopment and modifications be directed away from beach areas. • Urge counties to incorporate the 3.2 ft. sea level rise exposure area (SLR-XA) into their general and development plans. • Encourage agencies and non-governmental utility providers to identify and prioritize assets within the 3.2 ft SLR-XA or more as described in the State's Sea Level Rise report, identify adaptation measures, and to provide a status update on this activity annually to the Climate Commission. • Support legislation that funds State programs to meet mitigation goals, and to bring resources to assist in planning and implementation for sea level rise and other climate related impacts.