

August 22, 2019

To: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission

From: Permitted Interaction Group on Climate Equity

Re: Report to the Commission on Findings and Recommendations for September 4, 2019 meeting

Scope of the Permitted Interaction Group

A Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) was established at the Climate Commission's meeting on April 24, 2019. Its scope was defined as:

To investigate the issue of how to recognize and address the inequitable distribution of benefits, burdens, and processes caused by climate change impacts and policy, and questions such as:

- What are the marginalized and vulnerable groups in Hawaii?
- How will/can our policies and practices impact these groups?
- What are examples of effective climate change policy and models of shared decision making centered on equity?

The group met twice --on May 13, 2019 and July 29, 2019--to discuss its findings and recommendations. Listed below are members of the Group. In addition, subject matter experts were present to provide input where needed.

Members of the Permitted Interaction Group:

Michael Yee, County of Hawaii
Kealoha Fox, OHA
Josh Stanbro, C&C Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency
Lynn Araki-Regan, State Dept. of Transportation
Justine Nihipali, Office of Planning, Coastal Zone Management

Findings and Recommendations:

To address the above questions, the PIG investigated the following topics. Findings and recommendation are listed below:

1. What are the marginalized and vulnerable communities in Hawaii?

Findings: While some frameworks exist for identifying vulnerable communities, such as the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), ALICE, and Hawaii's multi hazard plan, nothing specific exists for climate vulnerability for Hawaii at a level that can be used at a more granular level to identify climate vulnerability "hotspots." Any such analysis should be done with the help of community

leaders, rather than reaching out directly to community members who have just experienced traumatic events. Appropriate community leaders would need to be identified.

Recommendation: DOH should continue to collaborate with CDC, and state and county partners, to formulate the SVI at a more local level for Hawaii, taking into account some of the indicators described in the State’s multi hazard plan, and any other relevant indicators.

2. **An equity playbook for climate policies**

Findings: A playbook for equity would contain discussion of a definition, framework, and examples of climate equity. Although various playbooks have been developed on a national level, such a document does not exist at present for Hawaii. Any such document would need to consider the vulnerable groups described in a framework, as well as incorporate cultural responsiveness, reflect indigenous voices and customary law practices. It would also contain a framework that helps departments and agencies incorporate climate equity into their reports and plans going forward, and provide guidance for mitigation, adaptation and resilience, as reflected in the Commission’s statements.¹

For ground transportation policies, such guidance should incorporate equity issues surrounding the adoption of electrification of transportation, as well as a statement on “zero- emission miles.” Hawaii is working with the US Climate Alliance on an Alliance-wide statement that could also be used as a basis for equity in Hawaii. How will Hawaii’s vulnerable communities be assured a fair and equitable transition to clean transportation?

For adaptation policies relating to sea level rise, such guidance should address equity issues surrounding access to information in the identification and prioritization of addressing the impacts of sea level rise on critical public infrastructure—such as roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, shelters and other structures. How will Hawaii’s vulnerable communities provide input into policymaking that addresses the impacts of sea level rise?

For resilience to the impacts of climate change, such guidance should address equity issues related to post-disaster recovery. This needs to recognize and incorporate the communities’ vulnerabilities, and access to recovery planning, funds and implementation. How will Hawaii’s vulnerable communities participate in post-disaster recovery?

Recommendation:

That the Commission adopt an overall statement that strongly urges all government entities in Hawaii to incorporate equity considerations into their planning, policy development and implementation for climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

¹ The Commission’s mission statement: Hawaii’s Climate Commission recognizes the urgency of climate threats and the need to act quickly. It promotes ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation in a manner that is clean, equitable and resilient.

The Commission’s statements on mitigation and adaptation can be found on climate.hawaii.gov