



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION
COMMISSION
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Co-Chairs:
Chair, DLNR
Director, Office of Planning

Commissioners:
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Chair, Senate WTL
Chair, House EEP
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Director, Hawai'i DP
Director, Kaua'i DP
The Adjutant General
Manager, CZM

June 19, 2020

Aloha Members of the Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis:

Thank you for your open letter requesting input on how to address the climate change crisis and transition to a clean economy and healthier environment for all Americans. We are pleased and honored to respond as co-Chairs of the Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

The Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission is a high-level multi-jurisdictional body that guides the priorities of the state's climate response. Co-chaired by DLNR and Office of Planning, it consists of a total of 20 members—chairs of four legislative committees, and executive department heads at the county and state levels. The Commission "recognizes the urgency of climate threats and the need to act quickly. The Commission promotes ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsible strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation in a manner that is clean, equitable and resilient." The Commission, established by Act 32 SLH 2017 to uphold the United States' pledges under the Paris Agreement, is mandated to provide "...policy direction, facilitation, coordination, and planning.." and to "...establish climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and goals to help guide planning and implementation statewide..." (HRS P225-3).

First and foremost, the Commission acknowledges the deep impact the current crisis is having on the health and well-being of our state, our country and our world, especially on its frontline community members. The State's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission offers its assistance in recovery and resilience planning efforts to also address the climate crisis alongside the current pandemic's health, social and economic crisis.

The urgent focus on short-term needs is undeniable. However, the pandemic represents a crisis moment in our world's history, and when seized, such moments can lead to a new and better normal while addressing the climate crisis. For all of us, wise investments can boost job creation in the short-term and create longer term benefits of resiliency, adaptation and mitigation to climate change. Examples include energy efficiency retrofits for existing buildings; using nature-based solutions to reduce atmospheric carbon, increase food security, and prevent flooding and erosion; expansion of active transportation infrastructure, and more. While the latter two are particular focuses of the Commission's work in climate adaptation and mitigation, the Commission urges ambitious action on all climate change strategies that are clean, equitable and resilient.

An economic recovery must be closely tied with climate change impacts, which in turn must be intertwined with public health issues. Addressing these together will help us formulate a coherent

response to disasters and protect against uncertain conditions. In short, “we are going to have to multitask on this one, as delay will cost lives and livelihoods.”¹

The Commission’s work is currently focused on reducing emissions from ground transportation; and on building a Climate Ready Hawaii. A Climate Ready Hawaii relies heavily on nature-based solutions to provide the “multi-taskability” that is needed to conserve and restore the planet’s ecosystems and reduce carbon emissions, protect public health, create jobs and a stronger, diversified economy to make us more resilient to current and future disruptions caused by climate change and related events.

While federal programs and grants to assist in climate mitigation are critical to improving life in Hawaii and the nation, adapting successfully to the impacts of climate change is existential for states like Hawaii. We urge your Committee to support initiatives such as Climate Ready Hawaii, that would help states implement strategies to address vulnerability and climate induced risk to our infrastructure and assets, and provide the readiness needed by our communities to deal with climate impacts.

National policies that increase investment in active transportation embody the Commission’s values to address clean energy goals, equity, and resilience. In addition, such investment can improve safety, build economic activity and is generally cheaper.² The Commission urges your Committee to increase support for such investment, as it has the potential to improve American lives, and simultaneously address the climate crisis.

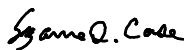
As the Federal government deliberates on its recovery and stimulus packages, and other investments, the Commission urges that climate change solutions be considered hand-in-hand, to address the challenge of recovery and preparedness. Smart investment decisions now can create better jobs, a more prepared nation, and reduce exposure to climate impacts and natural disasters. On the other hand, locking the nation into a high-emissions path will only increase vulnerability and risk to future events, and expose us all to more instability.

The International Energy Agency’s latest analysis shows that renewable energy investments are mostly not on track to meet global climate change goals.³ In order to move quickly, we must seize the opportunity to work on the climate crisis.

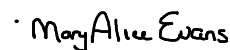
If useful to you, we are happy to coordinate through the Commission, where an increase in specific federal investments could be crucial to climate action. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and for your hard work on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Suzanne D. Case, Co-Chair
Department of Land and Natural Resources



Mary Alice Evans, Co-Chair
Office of Planning, DBEDT

¹“Key Investments Can Build Resilience to Pandemics and Climate Change”. Leonardo Martinez-Diaz and Lauren Sidner. World Resources Institute (April 2020) Available at: <https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/04/coronavirus-pandemic-climate-change-investments>

² <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/evaluating-complete-streets-projects-a-guide-for-practitioners/>.

³ https://www.iea.org/news/uneven-progress-on-clean-energy-technologies-faces-further-pressure-from-the-covid-19-crisis?utm_campaign=IEA%20newsletters&utm_source=SendGrid&utm_medium=Email