



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committees on Water, Land, and Agriculture  
and  
Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at 2:45pm

By

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And

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### SB 2353 – RELATING TO COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

Chairs Gabbard and Nishihara, Vice Chair Espero, and members of the committees:

We support this SB 2353 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget for the University of Hawai'i.

This bill alters chapter 205A by taking several strong steps in recognition of the impacts of future sea level rise. It would transition counties to a calculation of long-term historical shoreline change as a means of establishing the construction setback. The bill establishes a minimum setback of 60 ft for all new development. The bill requires a covenant for homeowners with a setback exemption or waiver preventing coastal armoring – essentially a “build at your own risk” clause. It also prohibits development in areas exposed to projected sea level rise.

The latest published research (Kopp et al., 2014) concludes that projected future heights of sea level for Honolulu will reach a mean of 1 ft by 2050 and 2.8 ft by 2100, and potentially a maximum of over 4.5 ft by end of the century.

In recognition of the threat of sea level rise, the U.S. Congress in their FY2016 omnibus package made it a law that federal agencies plan for rising seas in all projects. Executive Order 11988 is now amended that all projects using federal funding must meet a federal flood risk standard that either:

- 1) Use data and methods “informed by best-available, actionable climate science”;
- 2) Build 2 ft above the 100-year flood elevation for standard projects, and 3 ft above for critical buildings (hospitals and evacuation centers); or
- 3) Build to the 500-year flood elevation.

The action proposed in this bill is consistent with these important steps and will result in significant savings and hazard reduction for the state of Hawai'i if implemented. It will also move Hawai'i forward in preserving beaches, building more resilient communities, improving real estate investment, decreasing homeowner insurance through the FEMA community rating system, adapting to impacts of sea level rise, and other significant results.