



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, March 18, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

By
Charles "Chip" Fletcher, PhD
Interim Dean
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology
And
Darren Lerner, PhD
Director, Sea Grant College Program
And
Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2248 HD1 – RELATING TO BEACH MANAGEMENT ON THE NORTH SHORE OF OAHU

Chairs Kim, Inouye, and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani, Elefante, and Richards, and members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) and the Climate Resilience Collaborative (CRC) support House Bill 2248 HD1, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to develop a north shore beach management plan for the north shore of O'ahu from Sunset point to the Kapo'o (Sharks Cove) area.

Hawai'i Sea Grant has developed similar beach and dune management plans for Maui County, Kailua Beach Park and the Hawai'i Dune Restoration Manual as recent examples of similar work.

A common element of coastal management planning involves the evaluation and assessment of climate adaptation pathways, triggers and implementation strategies. This is an important component of any coastal planning effort and has been a consideration for this bill as it would serve to provide professional merit as a comprehensive climate adaptation plan rather than just a beach management plan.

Recent community-oriented working group activity strongly supports the goals and objectives of this measure. [The North Shore Coastal Resilience Working Group](#) (NSCRWG) was launched by the Surfrider Foundation, Surfrider's O'ahu Chapter, the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College, and consulting firm SSFM International to proactively address accelerated beach loss and improve community resilience on the North Shore. In 2021 and 2022, the NSCRWG facilitated meaningful, community-driven discussions related to the future of coastal management on the North Shore. The Working Group released a report detailing critical concerns and recommendations for immediate action.

The NSCRWG report details three priority areas of concern as erosion hotspots, including; Rocky Point - Sunset Beach, Laniākea - Chun's, and Mokulē'ia, with identified key strategies including the development of a beach and dune management plan and pilot restoration projects.

This measure, if passed, can serve as an important coastal management, adaptation planning and community engagement model for other coastal communities struggling with coastal hazards and sea level rise and can facilitate improved community-focused coastal planning statewide.

CRC is a multi-investigator research project at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa focused on sea level rise adaptation and climate resilience. CRC is updating coastal models that project the impacts of sea level rise.

Hawai'i Sea Grant's mission is to provide integrated research, extension, and education activities that increase understanding and use of ocean and coastal resources of the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands and support the informed personal, policy, and management decisions that are integral to realizing this vision. Hawai'i Sea Grant is part of a national network of 34 university-based programs associated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that promote better understanding, conservation, and use of coastal resources.

The research that goes into identifying Hawai'i's exposure to sea level rise is coming out of the University of Hawai'i School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. To maintain our understanding of sea level threats based on the latest science, these researchers need ongoing financial support from the State. CRC would be happy to provide updated sea level rise data and projections to the Committee or any lawmaker upon request.

CRC and Hawai'i Sea Grant support House Bill 2248, provided its adoption does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.