



**Testimony to the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection
and Water, Land & Ocean Resources
Tuesday, February 7, 2012
10:30 a.m.
State Capitol - Conference Room 325**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2330 RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Chairs Coffman and Chang, Vice Chairs Kawakami and Har, and members of the committees:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii opposes H.B. No. 2330 in its present form. The bill proposes to require the state office of planning and county planning authorities to take into account a predicted sea level rise of 1 foot above current sea level by 2050 when permitting and planning for development.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the “Voice of Business” in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state’s economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

As drafted, the bill proposes to:

1. Amend Chapter 46, HRS to require the governing body or planning commission or department of each county shall take into account a predicted sea level rise of one foot above current sea level by 2050 when reviewing applications for building, zoning, and other development permits and when developing future county plans for building, zoning, permitting, and other development; and,
2. Amend Chapter 223, HRS to require the office of planning shall develop a strategic plan for directing statewide growth that takes into account a predicted sea level rise of one foot above current sea level by 2050.

These amendments to have agencies develop public policies to plan for sea level rise apparently are based on “. . . sea level has risen in Hawaii at a rate of approximately .06 inches per decade over the past century. Worldwide, the rate of sea level rise has doubled since 1990.” It goes on to cite “. . . research that finds that sea levels may rise one foot over their current levels by 2050.”

Our basic opposition is based on the fact that there does not appear to be any scientific evidence gathered that would predict when and the rate at which sea level rise would occur. This information would appear to us to be critical in developing any type of plan on how to prepare. Our recommendation would be to focus on the science first and then develop the public policy based on the scientific evidence.

Finally, we would suggest that the any legislation on this matter include more scientist who understand the mechanics of sea level rise, and economist who can compare cost/benefits of the various responses to sea level rise as the legislature considers the development of public policies to address this situation.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our views.