



Climate Change Commission

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 South King Street, 11th Floor • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

COMMISSIONERS

Victoria Keener, Ph.D., Chair
Rosanna Alegado, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Bettina Mehnert, FAIA, LEED AP
Makena Coffman, Ph.D.
Charles Fletcher, Ph.D.

Climate Change Commission Monday, June 15, 2021 9:00 AM Zoom Virtual Meeting Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chair Victoria Keener, Vice Chair Rosie Alegado, Makena Coffman, and Bettina Mehnert.

Members Absent: Charles Fletcher.

Public: Matthew Gonser, Hayley Cook (Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency); Courtney Se-Ako (Department of Corporation Counsel); Dean Nakano (Board of Water Supply); Terry Chan (Department of Design and Construction); Todd Bridges, Todd Barnes, Justin Goo, Jessica Podoski, Jennifer Moore, Brian Kamisato, Michael Wong (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers); Nancy McPherson (Department of Hawaiian Homelands); Kendra Obermaier (County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development); Diana Lopera (Climate Ready Hawai'i VISTA Cohort); Henry Curtis (Life of the Land); Morgan Kelly (Hawai'i Green Growth); Aida Arik; Arthur Lai; Dave Martin; Jon Yoshinaga; Melanie Islam; Mike Plowman; Myoung Oh; Rachael Han; Teresa Dawson

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Keener called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.
- 2. Roll Call:** Four Commissioners were present. Quorum was established.
- 3. Approval of a new agenda item number five, "Presentation from Dr. Todd Bridges, National Lead of the USACE Engineering with Nature (EWN) Program":** The Commission found the addition of Dr. Bridges' presentation to not be of reasonably major importance and, provided no action on the item would be taken, found it would not affect a significant number of persons. Chair Keener moved and Vice Chair Alegado seconded the motion to add the agenda item (**AYE:** Keener, Alegado, Mehnert, Coffman; **NAY:** None; **ABSTAIN:** None).
- 4. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of May 17, 2021:** The Commission voted to postpone adoption of the May 17, 2021 meeting minutes until the next Commission meeting (**AYE:** Keener, Alegado, Mehnert, Coffman; **NAY:** None; **ABSTAIN:** None).
- 5. Report on the Activities of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR):**

Executive Director Matthew Gonser presented the following:

- On June 2, 2021, the Honolulu City Council officially adopted the City and County of Honolulu's ("City") first Climate Action Plan (CAP). CCSR hosted an interdepartmental implementation kickoff to set the stage for prioritizing work ahead. CCSR will also be facilitating department-specific implementation planning sessions over the next couple of months.
- As related to actions within the CAP, Director Gonser shared a Star Advertiser story (<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2021/06/11/hawaii-news/from-parking-lot-to-boutique-hotel/>) as an update on Ordinance 20-41 (Bill 2 (2020)) related to off-street parking. The project detailed in

the article demonstrates the direct linkage between the recent changes to the parking regulations in the Land Use Ordinance and improved community conditions by not over-requiring parking in urban settings.

- CCSR led the City's first-ever equity foundations workshop series for City employees, developed by CCSR's Climate Resilience and Equity Program, with the hope it becomes a recurring offering within the City's Department of Human Resources training catalogue.
- Dexter Kishida, CCSR Food Security and Sustainability Program Manager, was a contributor in the final two parts of the HawaiiNewsNow "Climate for Change" series (<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2021/05/16/hnn-premiere-final-climate-change-documentary-food-system-vulnerabilities/>) about the intersection between the COVID-19 pandemic, disaster management, climate change, and food insecurity in Hawai'i.
- After a competitive application in partnership between CCSR and the Office of Economic Revitalization, Honolulu was chosen to be part of the National Association of Counties (NACO) Economic Recovery Cohort. Honolulu will join nine to ten other counties around the U.S. and Director Gonser can provide additional details in the future following the cohort kick-off.
- Ben Sullivan is joining CCSR in the Energy Program Manager Position. He is joining from the County of Kaua'i Office of Economic Development.
- CCSR will also be bringing on a new Office Manager soon who will take over administrative support for the Commission.

Questions and Comments that followed:

1. Chair Keener asked about the NACO project and the focus of the program. Director Gonser said the initial kickoff is an opportunity to ask questions, and he will get a better sense of timeline and workflow during the first few meetings. He noted the program is an opportunity to define some specific challenges and needs to target as part of Honolulu's recovery strategy. Chair Keener asked if Director Gonser which other counties are participating in this program. Director Gonser listed out the counties involved.

Comments and Public Testimony that followed: No public comments or testimony were received.

6. Presentation from Dr. Todd Bridges, National Lead of the USACE Engineering with Nature (EWN) Program:

- Dr. Todd Bridges shared a presentation, which can be found here: <https://resilientoahu.org/s/266-EWN-Honolulu-CC-June-2021.pdf>.
- Dr. Bridges discussed the breadth of hazards present in the world and then outlined the history of infrastructure within the U.S.
- Dr. Bridges introduced engineering with nature with examples of how wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs increase resilience and provide flood risk reduction.
- Dr. Bridges discussed various types of strategies for climate adaptation with examples from across the world.
- Dr. Bridges summarized the benefits of nature-based solutions and shared that the "International Guidelines on Natural and Nature-Based Features for Flood Risk Management" guidance document is expected to be released this summer.

Questions and Comments that followed:

1. Commissioner Mehnert asked what Hawai'i could do as an island. Dr. Bridges responded that conversations with regulatory agencies, engineering organizations, and companies will help to figure out solutions fit for the 21st century.
2. Chair Keener asked about the Engineering with Nature Program, and how it integrates into the larger USACE list of projects. Dr. Bridges responded that USACE is working with various related management teams and programs and is always looking for opportunities to contribute ideas to be incorporated into the projects.

Comments and Public Testimony that followed:

1. Director Gonser asked how USACE is engaging local partners and organizations. Dr. Bridges responded that they have studies going on for engaging with non-federal and local systems. He

agrees there needs to be more dialogue across the federal government to the state and to the county about space and land management. Brian Kamisato, the Director of Regional Business for USACE stressed the importance of dialogue and introduced those involved in the Honolulu District, including Jennifer Moore, Todd Barnes, Justin Goo, and Jessica Podoski, who discussed inclusion of climate resilience in their projects.

2. Nancy McPherson (Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL)) commented that DHHL is interested in examples for addressing shoreline erosion and inundation from flash flooding through holistic approaches. She also asked if there are any specific examples of steep watersheds besides West Virginia. Dr. Bridges responded that Scotland is an example, as they have a lot of steep slopes, where USACE is aiming to slow and spread out the water flow and focus on reforestation.
3. Jennifer Moore shared her contact information: Jessica Podoski, PE - Coastal Engineer, Civil Works Technical Branch, jessica.h.podoski@usace.army.mil.
4. Brian Kamisato reinforced that finding partners within communities could help with feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses to bring federal dollars to help local communities.

7. Communication and Correspondence from the Public

1. Svea Breckberg shared information regarding public school hurricane shelter statistics, and asked the Commission to vote in favor of Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency's (HI-EMA) request for hurricane shelter retrofitting funding. The Commission noted that Ms. Breckberg's correspondence was a forwarded email for which the original recipients were state agencies, and they do not necessarily have a role in voting for HIEMA's request but will look into it.

Comments and Public Testimony that Followed: No public comments or testimony were received.

8. Discussion on the Climate Change & the Construction Industry Guidance Document

- Commissioner Mehnert stated that the stakeholder meeting was completed and the Google Form survey concluded receiving responses. The Commissioners are currently working on incorporating the feedback into the draft guidance document.

Questions and Comments that followed: No questions or comments were received.

Comments and Public Testimony that followed: No public comments or testimony were received.

9. Discussion and Action on Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission (Term: July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022)

- Chair Keener announced her term as Chair ends on June 30, 2021 and conducted the election for a new Chair and Vice Chair.
- Commissioner Coffman and Vice Chair Alegado nominated Commissioner Fletcher for Chair for the term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 (**AYE:** Alegado, Coffman, Keener, Mehnert; **NAY:** None; **ABSTAIN:** None). Given Commissioner Fletcher's absence, acceptance of the nomination will occur at the next Commission meeting.
- Chair Keener and Commissioner Coffman nominated Vice Chair Alegado to remain the Vice Chair for the term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 (**AYE:** Alegado, Coffman, Keener, Mehnert; **NAY:** None; **ABSTAIN:** None).

Questions and Comments that followed: No questions or comments were received.

Comments and Public Testimony that followed: No public comments and testimony were received.

10. Discussion on the Commission's Focus Areas of Work for Calendar Year 2022

- Commissioner Coffman asked to hear from CCSR about any needs the Commission could help with. Director Gonser responded that the climate adaptation strategy project, Climate Ready O'ahu (<https://www.climatereadyoahu.org>), keys in on the top five climate hazards of concern, including sea level rise, coastal erosion, and increasing temperatures. Gonser noted that

increasing temperatures has not been given as much attention as sea level rise from the state, so it would be helpful for some guidance about increasing temperatures from land change. Director Gonser would also like to see more follow-up from Dr. Bridges' presentation and additional topics will likely arise out of the City's monthly One Water panel meetings.

- Chair Keener asked if there are any specific organizations or sectors that Director Gonser would like the Commission to reach out to and invite to a future meeting. Director Gonser responded that there is a lot more CCSR can do to learn from existing community-based stewardship, environmental, and education-based groups, such as Mālama Learning Center, where sharing information, particularly around engaging with the City, would benefit both entities.
- Chair Keener asked if the City collaborates with the invasive species councils. Director Gonser responded he would look into it, but believes the Board of Water Supply engages with the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry and Wildlife and the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee.
- Vice Chair Alegado requests that when it is possible to have meetings in person again to have the meetings in the community and outside of the urban core. Chair Keener asked Director Gonser if there are any updates on when in-person meetings are starting again. Director Gonser did not have any specific updates at this time. Commissioner Coffman reiterated the importance of the Commission to bring in information and start conversations.
- Vice Chair Alegado would like to invite youth climate voices to contribute to climate conversations. Director Gonser responded that through last year's election, there was a Charter Amendment to establish a Youth Commission, which is still underway.

Questions and Comments that followed: No questions or comments were received.

Comments and Public Testimony that followed: No comments or public testimony were received.

11. Public Input for Matters Not on the Agenda: No public comments were received.

12. Tentative Next Meeting Date: The next meeting date is Tuesday, July 13th at 9:00 AM via Zoom.

13. Announcements:

1. Commissioner Coffman thanked Rachael Han for her assistance with the Commission and confirmed her fellowship will end following the next meeting.

14. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 AM.