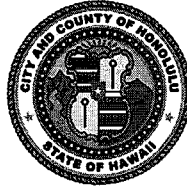


OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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February 6, 2023

The Honorable Esther Kia'āina, Chair
and Members
Committee on Planning and the Economy
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Kia'āina and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Bill 41 (2022), CD1 Relating to Shoreline Setbacks

The Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency ("CCSR") strongly supports Bill 41 (2022), CD1, which amends Chapter 26 of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021 to increase shoreline setbacks and implement an erosion-rate-based shoreline setback formula. CCSR additionally supports Councilmember Kia'āina's Proposed CD2 to Bill 41, CD1.

O'ahu has already lost over five miles of sandy beaches to coastal erosion, shoreline hardening, and sea level rise over the past century¹. If no action is taken, we can expect additional impacts to approximately 5,640 acres of urban-zoned land and 3,800 existing structures, totaling \$12.9 billion in economic losses to properties and structures². Confronted with these consequences, the City has a responsibility to protect life and property while ensuring the longevity and integrity of one of O'ahu's most important cultural, natural, and economic resources—our beaches. Shoreline setbacks are a critical tool the City uses to fulfill this responsibility. Existing setbacks are proving insufficient for the changes we have already observed as evidenced by recent large winter swells and/or Kona storms threatening the life and safety of residents in their homes along our shoreline. The changes of increasing and accelerating sea level rise, coastal erosion, and high waves, require changes to shoreline management.

Bill 41, CD1 takes an important and necessary step to reduce further damage to properties by increasing shoreline setbacks for all development, as the science tells us sea

1 Fletcher, C.H., et. al. 2012. National Assessment of Shoreline Change: Historical Shoreline Changes in the Hawaiian Islands: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2011/1051/>.

2 Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report. Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. 2017: https://climateadaptation.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/SLR-Report_Dec2017.pdf.

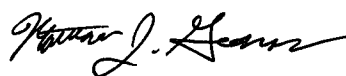
The Honorable Esther Kia 'āina, Chair
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February 6, 2023
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level rise and its impacts will accelerate through this century and beyond³. Additionally, implementing an erosion-rate-based setback formula localizes protection to the parcel-level, accommodating the unique conditions of each individual zoning lot, rather than our current one-size-fits-all approach. Utilizing decades of studied historical erosion rates to determine the best way to protect individual lots into the future is a proven model for success in managing risk along shorelines, as evidenced by erosion-based setbacks in place in Maui and Kaua'i counties for decades, and in other U.S. states and counties nationwide⁴.

Bill 41, CD1, in conjunction with City Council's consideration of Bill 42 (2022), CD1, advances implementation of the City's O'ahu Resilience Strategy and Development and Sustainable Communities Plans, which underscore the need to revise our shoreline regulations given updated science and data that provide more accurate and empowering information for protecting public safety⁵. Swift adoption and implementation of Bill 41, CD1 is essential for protecting residents' safety, beach access, and community resilience. Councilmember Kia'āina's proposed CD2 includes responsive and sensible amendments to ensure effective implementation of this critical measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of Councilmember Kia'āina's Proposed CD2 to Bill 41, CD1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 768-2277 or via e-mail at resilientoahu@honolulu.gov.

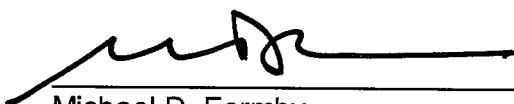
Sincerely,



Digitally signed by Gonser,
Matthew
Date: 2023.02.06 17:52:52 -10'00'

Matthew Gonser
Executive Director and
Chief Resilience Officer

APPROVED:



Michael D. Formby
Managing Director

³ City and County of Honolulu Climate Change Commission Sea Level Rise Guidance (July 2022):
https://www.resilientoahu.org/s/HonoluluClimateChangeCommission-SeaLevelRiseGuidance_Updated-July2022-sadb.pdf

⁴ City and County of Honolulu Climate Change Commission Guidance on Revisions to the Revised Ordinance of Honolulu Chapter 23, Regarding Shoreline Setbacks (December 2019):
<https://www.resilientoahu.org/s/HonoluluClimateChangeCommission-ROH23ShorelineSetbackGuidance-Dec2019.pdf>

⁵ *Ola: O'ahu Resilience Strategy* Action 29: Protect Beaches and Public Safety with Revised Shoreline Management Rules: https://www.resilientoahu.org/s/Ola_Oahu_Resilience_Strategy-lfrm.pdf#page=46.