MISC. COMM. 346

*ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY (EES)

Presentation on the City's Annual Sustainability Report (2026) by the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency.
Testimony

***ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY (EES) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Aug 25, 2026 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 0

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
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Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Aug 19, 2026 @ 09:23 AM

Testimony for the Honolulu City Council
Committee on Energy, Environment, & Sustainability
The Honorable Matt Weyer, Chair

20 August 2026

Aloha Chair Weyer, and Committee Members,

As a strong supporter of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (OCCSR), having aided its forebear 100 Resilient Cities way back in 2017, I find myself now charged by moral obligation to use my independence to advocate for focused clarity.

Lest my comments by taken for 'friendly fire,' let me add that I hold the work of OCCSR and its Exective Director Kealoha Fox, PhD, in esteem. Now, as I can best elucidate from the City's 2026 Sustainability Report (2026):

I. **Disaster Preparedness.**
   A. **Preparedness Trainings** are shockingly down from 2024-2025 (1301 to 471); *This is due to Trump Administration cuts to FEMA's National Preparedness operations and grants.*

   B. Similarly, **Mitigation Grants** are not subject to linear rates of growth, not only because of Trump Administration policy, but also *because Mitigation Grants are calculated, post hoc, from actual presidential declarations for major disasters.* Disasters do not occur regularly or predictably in terms of dollar amount damages. Hence, the City cannot assume into the future what Mitigation grant dollar amounts will exactly be.

   C. What's unmeasured? Is the city actually more prepared for disasters? Wasn't the 2025 Waikiki traffic snarl a repeat of a quite similar tsunami scare in the 1980s, and recollective of the 2018 False Missile Alert? What about the Kona Lows and Hurricane Lala? Where is this captured in the data? Who holds responsibility?

II. **Traffic**
   A. **Fatalities** jumped 182% from 2023-2025; 2026 apparently has 'only' 25 (per the news). *However, Honolulu's fatalities are always high against other cities, per capita.*

      Raw data in chart form hides this fact. Will the city report compare fatalities per capita to other cities, to normalize the wild swings between years? Will this remain a context-less piece of data?

      Who is responsible for chronically high fatalities and other casualties, OCCSR or the Department of Transportation Services (DTS)?

      Similarly, what does accountability under **Vision Zero** mean? Does this year's stochastic decline in fatalities mean the status quo is acceptable? I think not.

   B. Does the city want new transportation system users to be primary pedestrian/bicycle/transit-mode, and what will it do to further that, and who will be responsible?

Where is the connectivity? Are the assumptions purely optimistic best-case outcomes for Skyline filling the gap? Surely, even as a rail supporter, I must cast some doubt on the continued sunny optimism for rail projections (especially ridership).

III. **Municipal Energy Use** notably declined from 2018-2025 for the a) Board of Water Supply, b) Department of Environmental Services, c) Department of Design and Construction and d) Department of Facilities Maintenance. *But it grew a lot for DTS.*

IV. Climate Action

Now we arrive at the crux. The city's first "strategies" are either very difficult to measure or are "add-ons" to how Climate Adaptation was initially depicted. How do we measure the public's understanding? How are we measuring how "center"ed climate equity is? *I'm not doubting their worthiness as* ideals*, I'm highlighting their fuzziness in objective measurement.* Capital improvements (dollars, linear feet, water detention capacity) is more clear-cut.

While climate science *implementation* is not pure science, and its 'art' can and should be honed with time, the heart of city Adaptation is physical infrastructure and to some considerable extent, specific human services.

A. Strategy 12: "Keep out communities cool..." *Only 2 actions have been completed, with 1 in progress.*

B. Strategy 9: "Integrate climate resilience into City capital planning..." *Only 1 is completed, and 4 are in progress.*

As OCCSR has now risen to 25 named positions, with the upcoming addition of a 26th transferred over from the shuttering of the Office of Revitalization, let's ask this:

> *What is OCCSR doing best on sustainability? What is it not doing well, and why? What efforts are labor intensive, and which are most labor effective? How can the Council best aid OCCSR?*

When I walk through "town," my day is hotter, not cooler. My choice to forgo an atmosphere-mauling car, which spews harmful particulate into you and your children's lungs, hearts, and brains, is *not rewarded.* I now pay $90 a month for a bus system which has worse service (*worse routes, worse bus stops, and a hilariously awful bus app*) than before, with more danger from dangerous intersection crossings. Society still looks askance at people who don't primarily drive for transportation. Do these things look like progress?

From the anecdotal to the broader picture of actual climate research, I challenge how we're measuring progress. Next year's food prices show all the promise of being terribly high due to worldwide crop failures. Eventually, the ecosystem's fever will kill the patient. Whether we all suffer equitably, for example, doesn't make us any less dead. I hope the Council will help OCCSR succeed, because I worry that we're deeply in denial about the peril we're in.

Mahalo nui loa,
DYLAN P. ARMSTRONG, Individual Capacity