

Environmental Advisory Council - Draft Binder Description and Elevator Speeches

Draft Binder Description:

The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) advises the State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) on the status of the State's environmental goals and achievements. Members meet monthly to receive and provide information and support to various government and public interests and monitor Hawaii's environmental properties.

A half century ago, the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) (Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 343) established a system of environmental review at the state and county levels to ensure that decision-making considered not only economic and technical data but also environmental concerns. The EAC is a vital link between citizens and environmental decisions of the administrative and legislative branches of government.

The EAC comprises (up to) 15 volunteers from across the islands — appointed by the Governor to assure broad and balanced representation of education, business and environmentally pertinent disciplines and professions, such as the natural and social sciences, the humanities, architecture, engineering, public health and planning, education and research institutions with environmental competence, agriculture, real estate, visitor industry, construction, media, and voluntary community and environmental groups. In practice, the EAC:

Makes **connections**:

- Serves as a **liaison** between the Director of the OPSD and the public on matters concerning ecology and environmental quality.
- Serves the people of Hawai'i as a **bridge** of knowledge between the community and the State government regarding the environmental review process.

Facilitates **information sharing**:

- **Solicits** information, opinions, complaints, recommendations, and advice from the general public concerning ecology and environmental quality through public hearings or any other means.
- Offers **forums and seminars** as informational sessions for the community on key environmental issues.
- **Monitors the progress** of state, county, and federal agencies in achieving the State's environmental goals and policies and reports to OPSD for annual publication.

Provides advice and guidance to **improve environmental review**:

- Consults on and oversees the administrative rules that govern the environmental review process under HRS Chapter 343.
- **Advises** the OPSD in improving and modernizing the process of environmental review and periodically analyzes and proposes changes to the administrative rules implementing Chapter 343.

The EAC is guided by the principle of mutual, open, and respectful communication.

Draft Elevator Speech:

The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) — composed of up to 15 volunteers appointed by the Governor from across the islands — serves the people of Hawai'i as a bridge of knowledge between the community and the State government regarding the environmental review process. It is part of the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD). Through its monthly meetings, it monitors the progress of state, county, and federal agencies in achieving the State's environmental goals and policies, and offers informational sessions for the community on key environmental issues. The EAC also: (1) consults on and helps to amend the environmental impact statement administrative rules, HAR Title 11, Chapter 200.1; (2) reviews and concurs with agency exemption lists, and provides assistance and guidance to agencies regarding their exemption lists; and (3) monitors and testifies on legislation relevant to the EAC and its statutory objectives and priorities.