



STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM,
OFFICE OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, STATE OF HAWAII
235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 702, HONOLULU, HI 96813

Phone: 808-586-4185
Email: dbedt.opsd.erp@hawaii.gov

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Josh B. Green, M.D.

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Sylvia Luke

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Members
Michele Lefebvre
Rachel Sprague

Minutes

State of Hawai'i Environmental Advisory Council
7th floor conference area, 235 S. Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96813
Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 1:00 PM

Members Present

Dawn Hegger-Nordblom, Jay Stone, Michele Lefebvre, Mark Gordon, Rachel Sprague

Members Absent

None

Staff

Mary Alice Evans (OPSD Director), Tom Eisen (Environmental Review Program [ERP] Staff), Daniel Pham (ERP Staff), Isabelle Sholes (ERP Staff), Lokepa Frederick (ERP Staff)

Public Present

Eric Takamoto (County of Hawai'i Department of Water Supply [DWS]), Allan Simeon (County of Hawai'i DWS)

Note: **Bolded** items indicate text from the agenda.

Materials for this agenda and minutes of this meeting will be available at specific links indicated below or at: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/erp/ec-meetings/>

1. **Call to order, Roll Call, Introductions, Quorum**

With a quorum of five members present, Chairperson Hegger-Nordblom called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

2. **Review and adoption of minutes of the February 3, 2026, meeting**

- a. https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EC_Meetings/2026-02-03-Environmental-Advisory-Council-Minutes-draft.pdf

Member Lefebvre requested a change to the minutes to replace "Part 3" with "Part 2" in Type 3, Part 1, Number 8 under Item c of the Exemptions Committee on Page 2 of 5.

MOTION: Member Stone motioned to approve the February 2026 meeting minutes with the edit to Item c, Type 3, Part 1, Number 8 on Page 2 of 5. Member Lefebvre seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or public testimony. The EAC voted to approve the motion (4-0-1).

3. **Directors Report**

- a. **Updating members on the legislative status of bills that OPSD/ERP are monitoring**

The Governor's Message for the nomination and confirmation of Mark Gordon has been delayed and must be rescheduled.

Tom Eisen provided an update on SB2322. The bill would expand the usage of the historic sites trigger. It has gone through several committees, with amendments, and continues to progress. Director Evans expanded on the testimony submitted by OPSD. OPSD expressed concerns because there are no criteria in the proposed language for two (2) types of actions in Chapter 343-5, Subsection 4, regarding the types of proposed actions for which an EA is required. OPSD is not opposed to the concepts if there are standards that the applicant or agency can use to determine whether a site is potentially valuable or historical.

Eisen provided an update on HB1650, which would repeal the use of the Waikiki Special District from the list of triggers requiring environmental review. OPSD is in support of the bill as Waikiki now has extensive planning capacity. The bill passed the House and will presumably cross over to the Senate.

Eisen provided an update on HB1979, which proposes to shorten the window to legally challenge an exemption or an acceptance determination for actions proposing affordable housing or clean energy projects. The window for public comments would decrease from 120 days to 30 days. OPSD provided testimony for the bill. The bill passed the House and will presumably cross over to the Senate.

b. Continuing staff discussion on proposed Rule Updates

The agenda item was not discussed.

4. Exemptions Committee

a. Proposed Environmental Assessment Exemption List Revisions for the Department of Land and Natural Resources

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EC_Meetings/2026-02-23-DLNR-Exemption-List-Draft-2026-02-03.pdf

The Exemption List is available for public comment through March 10th. No public comments have been received at this time.

b. Proposed - Revised Environmental Assessment Exemption List Revisions Hawaii Health Systems Corporation

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EC_Meetings/2026-02-23-HHSC-Exemption-List-Draft-2026-02-03.pdf

The Exemption List is available for public comment through March 10th. No public comments have been received at this time.

c. Proposed Environmental Assessment Exemption List Revisions for the County of Hawaii, Department of Water Supply

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EC_Meetings/2026-03-03-COH-DWS-Agency-Exemption-List-with-changes-2026-02-12.pdf

The Council discussed the revisions made to the DWS Exemption List.

Member Stone requested clarification on the usage of the term “security systems” versus “surveillance systems” on Page 10 of 15 of the PDF.

Chair Hegger-Nordblom asked if DWS considered issues that may come up in the future to help ensure that the Exemption List stays relevant.

Member Stone suggested that the current list includes topics such as vulnerability assessments of the water system or emergency contingency plans.

Member Stone asked for clarification on the term "digital twins."

MOTION: Member Stone motioned to publish the County of Hawai'i DWS Exemption List for public review. Member Gordon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or public testimony. The EAC voted to approve the motion (5-0-0).

5. Review of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Repeal of Chapter 11-200.1 and Adoption of Chapter 15-20 Hawaii Administrative Rules

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EC_Meetings/Proposed-HAR-15-20-Rules-DRAFT-REVISIONS-3-Nov-2025.pdf

Director Evans introduced potential rule changes being discussed by OPSD staff.

OPSD staff are discussing what should be included in primary impacts, secondary indirect impacts, and cumulative impacts. The Chapter could more clearly define the terms and provide guidance and rules for those preparing an EA or EIS and to those making a determination as an approving or accepting authority. Member Lefebvre offered her assistance.

OPSD staff are discussing the terms "direct impact" versus "direct adverse impact," in order to provide more guidance regarding the intent of the statute and the rules for disclosure. Member Stone suggested using the term "direct impact" to ensure that positive impacts are highlighted, in addition to adverse impacts.

OPSD staff discussed adding a definition of "programmatic" EA or EIS to provide more guidance. OPSD requested input from EAC.

OPSD staff are discussing whether a supplemental EIS is necessary when a project undergoes any change, or if it is necessary only when the project might have additional adverse impacts.

Director Evans suggested adding a discussion draft to a future EAC agenda to garner public comments.

Director Evans discussed the process for the rule changes. The EAC will have to provide OPSD with a recommendation on a final set of amendments to the rules. OPSD will then submit a request to the Governor for the rules to go out for a public hearing. A second round of public hearings will be held if there are substantive comments that need to be addressed. OPSD would then make a recommendation to the Governor to adopt the revised rules.

The Council discussed having future discussions to provide recommendations regarding changes to the rules.

6. Legislative Committee

Member Stone generated a report of the bills being tracked for the Environmental Advisory Council members.

7. Announcements

Next Meeting TBD

The agenda item was not addressed.

8. Public Comments: Participants may provide comments about issues not on the agenda for possible inclusion on a future agenda.

The agenda item was not addressed.

9. Adjournment

Chairperson Hegger-Nordblom adjourned the meeting at 2:13 PM.