



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Biden-Harris Administration recommends funding of \$26 million for projects in Hawai'i to strengthen Climate-Ready Coasts as part of Investing in America agenda

Focus areas: Across NOAA **Topics:** Bipartisan Infrastructure Law , Climate-Ready Coasts

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A photo collage of just some of the projects being recommended for funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and NOAA's Climate-Ready Coasts initiative. (Image credit: NOAA)

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Today, Vice President Harris announced that the Department of Commerce has recommended \$26 million for projects across Hawai'i to make communities and the economy more resilient to climate change, as part of the Investing in America agenda. Across Hawai'i, eight projects will create jobs and boost economic and environmental outcomes for coastal communities. The awards are made under the Biden Administration's Climate-Ready Coasts initiative funded through the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\)](#) with additional funds leveraged from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

"Hawai'i's coral reefs and coastal habitats are central to the Aloha State's culture and economy," said **Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo**. "The Biden-Harris Administration is proud to be making a significant investment in restoring many of these important habitats, cleaning up marine debris, and ensuring Climate-Ready Coasts in Hawai'i."

Administered by the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Climate-Ready Coasts initiative is focused on investing in high-impact projects that create climate solutions by storing carbon; build resilience to coastal hazards such as extreme weather events, pollution and marine debris; restore coastal habitats that help wildlife and humans thrive; build the capacity of underserved communities and support community-driven restoration; and provide employment opportunities.

"These historic investments will ensure long-term protection and preservation of Hawai'i's most beloved coral reef ecosystems," said **NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D.** "NOAA is proud to recommend these projects to help coastal communities invest in their future, remove marine debris, and build resilience to the impacts of climate change."

"This is very exciting, because there are so many excellent organizations doing important work to save our water and our land, and they just need a bit more financial support to expand their efforts. These dollars will go a long way towards taking care of our home," said **Senator Brian Schatz**.

“Climate change has already had detrimental consequences in Hawaii and around the world,” said **Senator Mazie Hirono**. “As ocean temperatures and sea levels continue to rise, we must prioritize sustainable climate solutions that protect our coastlines and the communities that call them home. With this funding, NOAA is investing in community-driven solutions to build more resilient infrastructure and help combat the impacts of climate change. I'm glad to see this federal funding coming to Hawaii and I will continue working to protect Hawaii's environment and coastline for future generations.”

“There can be no doubt anymore about climate change’s impact on our oceans and coastlines as it is the reality we face today throughout our Hawai’i and our Pacific ‘ohana,” said **Congressman Ed Case (HI-01)**. “Our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act are generational efforts to combat this reality, and these coastal and nearshore waters resiliency projects implement appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of climate change-induced sea level rise and other weather pattern disruptions.”

“I’m pleased to celebrate the news that Hawai’i is receiving crucial funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Climate Ready Coasts initiative to help our state respond to the climate emergency. Hawai’i is on the front lines of climate change and already experiencing severe impacts from changing weather patterns. We have roads that are on the verge of falling into the ocean, farmers that are combating drought and emerging diseases, and infrastructure that needs to be strengthened and adapted to withstand more intense storms,” said **Congresswoman Jill Tokuda (HI-02)**. “I applaud this funding from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, which will not only result in better environmental outcomes, but also boost local job creation, expand community engagement, and have a long-lasting impact throughout our entire state.”

These projects are part of NOAA’s nearly \$6 billion total investment under BIL and IRA. Recommended projects and funding amounts in Hawai'i include:

- **REEFrame: Restoration of Severely Degraded Coral Reefs in Hawai'i via Permanent Coral Nurseries on 3D Printed Concrete Reef Frameworks**

Conservation International Foundation: \$8.9 million

Funding Source: Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants

Coral reefs are inextricably linked to Hawai'i's environment and economy. This investment in constructing permanent concrete reef framework structures will enhance the ecological resilience of Waikiki coral reefs and increase the socioeconomic resilience of the local communities that depend on them. These reef frameworks will serve as in-situ coral nurseries, attracting reef species known to benefit corals and becoming natural coral reefs. The project will be made in close collaboration with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and other partners. Students, community members, and cultural practitioners will be engaged throughout all phases of the project.

- **Holistic Community-led Habitat Restoration in a Hawaiian Context**

Mālama Maunalua: \$7.8 million

Funding Source: Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants

The traditional Native Hawaiian-based ridge-to-reef (ahupua'a) strategy will be used to address habitat degradation in the Niu, Kuli'ou'ou, and Wailupe watersheds of the Maunalua Bay region of O'ahu and represents the first time this approach has been used in a heavily urbanized area. From the mountain regions, flatlands, and streams that connect them to the coral reefs in the bay itself, this restoration investment will create watersheds and reefs that withstand future climate conditions. The project will focus on including Native Hawaiian communities and organizations in the restoration work, to build capacity and inspiration for future restoration efforts.

- **Restoring and Strengthening Resilience of Maui Nui Reefs**

The Coral Reef Alliance: \$3.1 million

Funding Source: Coastal Zone Management Habitat Protection and Restoration Grants

This investment will restore habitats and strengthen coastal resilience at two sites in West Maui and South Moloka'i in Hawai'i. Specifically, this project will restore the lower Wahikuli streambank, restore estuarine habitat within two 30-acre fishponds in south shore Moloka'i, engage the community in designing a water quality outreach and education program, and document lessons learned to inform and scale future restoration efforts statewide.

- **Nets to Roads: Innovative Research to Scale-up Removal and Repurposing of Derelict Fishing Gear**

Hawai'i Sea Grant: \$2.9 million

Funding Source: Marine Debris Challenge Competition

This project's goal is to accelerate the removal of large plastic marine debris across the entire Hawaiian archipelago and recycle it into public infrastructure. The team will build and test an oceanographic model to forecast the arrival of large marine debris in nearshore waters of Hawai'i to enable rapid at-sea removals, then create a centralized, relational database that captures critical information about each distinct large marine debris item at multiple stages. This project aims to contribute to a circular economy in which 40 tons of ocean plastics are recycled into public asphalt roads annually in the state of Hawai'i.

- **Development of New Detecting, Cutting, and Lifting Technologies to Increase Efficiency of Derelict Fishing Gear Removal**

Hawai'i Sea Grant: \$1.8 million

Funding Source: Marine Debris Challenge Competition

This project's goal is to utilize unmanned aerial vehicles and test commercially available electric diver propulsion vehicles to determine the effectiveness of identifying and geo-locating large derelict fishing gear in Hawai'i's shallow waters and reduce the survey time. This project aims to develop innovative solutions for the mitigation and clean-up of derelict fishing gear in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument that, when scaled up, have the potential to positively impact derelict fishing gear removal efficiency worldwide.

- **Waihe'e Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Refuge Kapoho Loko i'a and Lo'i Kalo Restoration**

Hawaiian Islands Land Trust: \$804,000

Funding Source: Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Underserved Communities

Hawaiian Islands Land Trust and Native Hawaiians from the Waihee and Waiehu communities will work together to restore the flow of water to the taro fields and fish pond at the Waihee Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Refuge on Maui. They plan to build a ridge-to-reef model for collaborative land and ocean stewardship by engaging the community through outreach meetings, workshops, volunteer workdays, and educational activities.

- **Coral Community Dive Program: Restoration, Resilience, and Monitoring in West O‘ahu**
Kuleana Coral Reefs: \$465,000

Funding Source: Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Underserved Communities

Kuleana Coral Reefs will launch a program to engage community members on West O‘ahu in coral reef conservation and reduce barriers to environmental work for Native Hawaiians. The Community Dive Program will provide professional certifications and training in coral restoration to local residents, and conduct on-the-ground coral restoration at community selected sites to help build coastal resilience.

- **Pacific Islands Marine Debris Community Action Coalition**
Hawai‘i Sea Grant: \$299,000

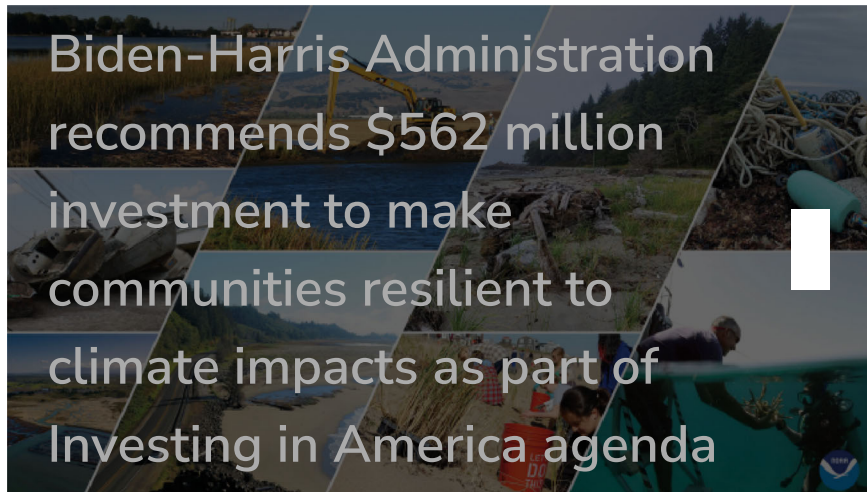
Funding Source: Marine Debris Community Action Coalitions

Hawai‘i Sea Grant will extend their Marine Debris Action Plan efforts to include partners throughout the Pacific region, such as Guam and American Samoa, who are disproportionately affected by marine debris due to their locations and insufficient waste infrastructure. The Coalition formed in this project will connect communities who have not been traditionally engaged with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, academic institutions and the business sector to build partnerships to more comprehensively and effectively address marine debris.

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