

Marine and Coastal Zone Advocacy Council (MACZAC) / Ke Kahu O Na Kumu Wai

MINUTES

Friday, January 10, 2025: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Hybrid format: Zoom and in person at the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) Conference Room

OPSD Conference Room
State Office Tower, 6th Floor
235 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Link to the electronic video recording of the meeting:

files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/czm/maczac/meeting_recordings/20250110_MACZAC_Mtg.mp4

ATTENDANCE

- **Members present (9):** Rich Brunner, Phil Fernandez, Denver Coon, Taryn Dizon, Will Sankey, Scott Sullivan, Sylvia Yanagisako, Kimbal Thompson, Robert (Bob) Nishimoto, PhD
- **Members absent (2):** Donna Brown, La'a Poepoe
- **Office of Planning and Sustainable Development/Coastal Zone Management (OPSD/CZM) staff present (13):** Mary Alice Evans (OPSD), Debra Mendes, Chris Liu, Joshua Hekekoa, Rachel Beasley, Sarah Chang, Mary Lou Kobayashi, Shichao Li, Kristi Kimura, Lisa Webster, McKenzie Lim, Ciera McQuaid, Tom Eisen
- **Others present (10):** Taylor Kaili McKenzie (O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council), Derek Brockbank (CSO), Dawn Hegger-Nordblom, Kanuanoe Hoomanawanui (SHPD), Randal Duldulao (DoD), Brian DeSanti, PhD (HSEO), Ketty Loeb, PhD (UH Manoa), Colin Moore, PhD (UH Manoa), Kylie Wager Cruz (member of the public), Elena Bryany (member of the public)

DISTRIBUTED MATERIAL

- MACZAC meeting agenda for January 10, 2025
- Draft minutes from September 6, 2024
- Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Report to MACZAC (January 10, 2025)

I. Call to Order

Scott Sullivan, who attended the meeting in person, called the meeting to order at 9:02am. Chair Phil Fernandez connected via Zoom and joined at 9:07am, leading the meeting after joining.

II. Approval of September 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as circulated.

III. Welcome from OPSD Interim Director

OPSD Director Mary Alice Evans welcomed everyone.

IV. Housekeeping and Introductions

New CZM Program Manager, Chris Liu, was introduced along with the new MACZAC Coordinators: Lisa Webster, McKenzie Lim, and Ciera McQuaid. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

MACZAC Coordinators proposed to change MACZAC term end dates from December 31 to June 30, with new terms to start July 1. Members with terms ending on December 31, 2024 (Donna Brown, Rich Brunner, and Robert (Bob) Nishimoto) agreed on the continuation of their term to the new proposed term end date. Elections for Chair and Vice Chair will be held at the second quarterly MACZAC meeting and will go into effect July 1, 2025.

Chair Fernandez proposed rotating MACZAC meeting locations between neighbor islands, as done in the past. MACZAC Coordinators will consult with CZM fiscal staff and investigate whether there is budget availability to support this initiative.

V. CZM Program Report including funding, focus areas, and project updates

National Initiative

CZM Habitat Protection and Restoration under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The CZM Program has the privilege of administering IIJA funds that support the goals and intent of the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Acts.

The County of Kaua'i Planning Department received full funding to support a Dune Restoration, Community Outreach, and Capacity-Building Project at Hanapēpē Salt Pond. This project will plan and implement a dune restoration program at Hanapēpē Salt Pond to create an essential buffer against storm surge and sea level rise and will protect the natural resources integral for the traditional Native Hawaiian practice of salt making.

A third round of IIJA funding was announced in mid-June, with LOIs due in August. The CZM Program received 12 LOIs and submitted three to NOAA for consideration. Two of the three LOIs were invited back to submit full proposals. Full proposals were due to NOAA on January 9, 2025.

Hawai'i CZM Program

Focus Area I: Development & Coastal Hazards

- **Regional Shoreline Management Strategy:** CZM has multiple ongoing projects to support various aspects of this initiative. CZM Staff contacts are Sarah Chang, Rachel Beasley, and Lisa Webster.
 - **Phase 2 (Agency Outreach and Consultations):** CZM, with technical support from Sea Engineering, Inc., is wrapping up Phase 2 of the Regional Shoreline Management Strategy initiative. This phase was composed of 10 consultation meetings with a total of 48 agency staff (Federal, State, and counties). A report compiling agency feedback and recommendations for next steps is in its final review.
 - **Phase 3 (Data Inventory and Preliminary Mapping):** CZM has initiated a contract with H.T. Harvey to identify and compile a statewide inventory of existing data relevant to regional shoreline delineation, and to use this existing data to conduct preliminary mapping to delineate regions and subregions within three selected moku: Pū‘ali Komohana, Maui; Kona, Moloka‘i; and Wai‘anae, O‘ahu. These regional delineation maps will inform pilot projects completed under Pili Nā Moku (see below). The Phase 3 completion date is October 2025.
 - **Pilot Projects:** OPSD CZM is a subawardee on the University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant’s NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge Award. This project, Pili Nā Moku, focuses on moku-scale restoration initiatives across the main Hawaiian Islands. As a subawardee, OPSD CZM will be working within the three moku listed above (see Phase 3 description) to pilot the regional shoreline delineation methodology and then identify one region per moku to develop a regional-scale adaptation action. OPSD CZM has been participating in collective visioning meetings with other subawardees. Project funding goes through 2029.

Focus Area III: Marine Ecosystems

- **Community-Based Monitoring Program:** Kōkua Community-Based Monitoring Project (CBM) received a no-cost extension approval from NOAA to continue on Phase II of the Project, lead by new Kōkua CBM coordinator, Hoaka Thomas. The second phase of the project will continue to provide support to community-based monitoring programs through collaborative development of Monitoring agreements. Kōkua CBM is beginning to plan and establish protocols for monitoring limu and water quality at the Hāni‘o site. Additionally, they are building relationships with the community in Ho‘okena on Hawai‘i Island to support new monitoring initiatives

Taylor Kaili (TK) McKenzie, O‘ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council, inquired about hiring for community-based liaisons for the Moku stewardship positions. Sarah updated that the positions are posted on the [UH Sea Grant website](#).

Taryn Dizon, MACZAC member, inquired about if there are any plans to do community-based coral monitoring in Kaua‘i and mentioned concerns of dead reefs off of Nu‘alolo Kai. Ms. McQuaid informed the group that Kōkua CBM has not discussed monitoring

the Nu'alolo Kai location, but Ms. McQuaid will relay the information to Kōkua CBM Coordinator and other related coral monitoring organizations.

Ms. Dizon brought up concerns that nearshore fish are being pushed further offshore as commercial operations have encroached closer to the Na Pali coastline.

Link to full CZM Report to MACZAC:

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/czm/maczac/handouts/czm_report_to_maczac_2025-01-10.pdf

VI. Presentation: Sea Level Rise Risk Perceptions and Policy Preferences Among Hawai'i's Civil Servants: Survey Results

Ketty Loeb, PhD, of the University of Hawai'i Institute for Sustainability and Resilience, and Colin Moore, PhD, of the University of Hawai'i School of Communication and Information, presented findings from a Summer 2024 survey assessing sea level rise (SLR) risk perceptions and policy preferences among Hawai'i State and County civil servants. The survey, distributed via email using Survey Monkey, included 35 multiple-choice and open-ended questions and received responses from 27 State and 102 county agency staff across various departments.

Key findings revealed that 92% of respondents believe SLR is happening, though only 53% felt moderately informed about it. A majority (72%) believe SLR is already harming people in Hawai'i, with coastline erosion, loss of beaches, and more frequent flooding events identified as the top consequences if no mitigative actions are taken. Additionally, 64% of respondents think SLR will significantly impact Hawai'i residents, yet most believe the State and counties are underprepared to address these challenges.

The survey highlighted major obstacles to SLR-related planning and policy development, including insufficient staff resources, lack of political will, and inadequate funding. Respondents largely agreed that the government has a responsibility to conserve and protect natural resources and land from SLR and expressed strong support for government funding to protect or replace critical public infrastructure, equipment, and utilities. Many preferred policy responses that promote living shorelines, such as coral reefs, wetlands, and sand dunes, over man-made structural barriers.

Regarding managed retreat, respondents supported measures such as government-funded relocation of critical infrastructure, regulatory changes to increase setbacks or buffer zones, prioritization of inland over coastal development, and enforcement of Act 16 (2020), which restricts private property from installing hardening structures on beaches unless in the public interest.

Dr. Loeb and her team have secured funding to administer SLR perception surveys to the general public across the State of Hawai'i. Sylvia Yanagisako, PhD, and Scott Sullivan, both MACZAC members, expressed gratitude and an interest in collaborating

and supporting this next phase. Dr. Loeb sought input on where the collected data should be shared and housed. Sarah Chang, CZM Project Analyst, noted that there is already a significant amount of SLR data and information available in Hawai'i and suggested that a collaborative platform to centralize this information could be beneficial for all stakeholders.

VII. Presentation: Understanding Potential Impacts of Offshore Energy Projects to the Marine and Coastal Environment

Brian DeSanti, PhD, from the Hawai'i State Energy Office presented on offshore energy options and their potential impacts on marine and coastal environments. Hawai'i currently sources 31% of its energy from renewable sources, with a goal of achieving a 100% renewable energy portfolio by 2045. While there are no commercial-scale marine energy projects contributing to the energy grid yet, several options are under consideration, including floating turbines anchored to the seafloor with an array of cables.

Potential impacts of these setups include fish aggregation device (FAD) effects, restrictions on fishing in designated zones, seabird fatalities, seafloor disturbances from cables, electromagnetic field impacts on marine life, disruption of cetacean migration routes, onshore connection point impacts, and cultural considerations for local communities.

Other marine energy options were also discussed, such as wave energy, exemplified by a test buoy at the Kāne'ohe Marine Corps Base currently under evaluation for energy output and durability, as well as the potential for ocean thermal energy conversion. Hawai'i's deep marine bathymetry presents unique challenges, with depths ranging from 700 to 1,500 meters at 12 nautical miles offshore, compared to existing projects in waters 200–300 meters deep. Community concerns also include the visual impact of turbines, which can be simulated using virtual headsets to assess their appearance from shore.

Attendees discussed the complexities and trade-offs associated with offshore energy projects, emphasizing the risks of inaction. Chair Fernandez, Mr. Sullivan, and Ms. McQuaid noted that the test buoy for wave energy had sustained damages and was tilted and semi-sinking, underscoring the importance of durability in future projects.

VIII. Report from MACZAC Members who attended the HCPO Conference

Chair Fernandez, Dr. Yanagisako, and Ms. Dizon shared insights from the sessions they attended at the recent Hawai'i Congress of Planning Officials (HCPO) Conference.

Dr. Yanagisako participated in breakout sessions, including "Crossing the Islands: Lessons and Action in State and County Planning," where panelists emphasized the importance of engaging existing community organizations who have built trust, rather than relying on State and county agencies to host public events. Additionally, planners expressed concerns regarding housing equity and affordability. In another session,

"Exploring Transfer of Development Rights for Managed Retreat in Hawai'i," discussions highlighted the challenges of implementing transfer of development rights, noting limited feasibility and a lack of market for such measures in Hawai'i. It was also observed that government buyouts have shown success only in specific cases, such as in Louisiana after repeated flooding events, and that legal and policy implications regarding public and private land boundaries require careful consideration.

Chair Fernandez attended a session titled "Sea Level Rise Impacts to County Parks", presented by Maui County. The session discussed the management of 64 shoreline county parks designated for public access and the assessment of applying managed retreat principles to government structures. Potential mitigation strategies discussed included relocating pavilions and rebuilding infrastructure inland. Although prioritization of parks has been completed and planning efforts are beginning, these projects are not currently a government priority.

Ms. Dizon attended a session focused on county resilience plans, noting insights from international examples, such as Singapore. The session highlighted a lack of plans, management, or enforcement for stream management, as well as the absence of resilience or mitigation plans specific to brush fires, particularly in old sugarcane plantation areas, which are highly susceptible.

IX. Hotspots

- **Lahaina Harbor**
Denver Coon, MACZAC member, reported that the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) is conducting water leak assessments and repairs at Lahaina Small Boat Harbor, expected to be completed by February or March, 2025. The county anticipates all of the commercial lots will be cleared by the end of February, with water and sewer repairs in the harbor area projected to finish by the end of March.
- **Court injunction blocks ocean recreation permits on Maui**
Mr. Coon also reported on the ongoing uncertainty surrounding commercial boat operations at Kā'anapali Beach due to a court ruling and lawsuit from 2017. Judge Peter Cahill ordered the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to halt issuing and renewing commercial permits until an Environmental Assessment (EA) is completed, or an exemption is determined. This decision impacts nearly 30 boat operators, with significant concerns over job losses, economic ripple effects, and uncertainty for employees and their families.

Boat operators stated that they follow existing regulations, including onshore waste discharge and parking arrangements, and are urging DLNR to seek temporary solutions that allow operations to continue while the environmental assessment process is underway. The ruling adds to the economic strain already present in West Maui after the Lahaina fire, with over 230 additional jobs at risk if operations cease. Stakeholders are calling for collaborative discussions to find a balanced resolution.

X. Public input on all agenda items

Dawn Hegger Nordblom, member of the public, expressed concerns about the court injunction blocking ocean permits and shared sentiments on its potential impact, particularly noting that placing the cost of the EA on applicants without prior notice could significantly affect businesses. She also emphasized the importance of staying informed about developments regarding the Honoapi'ilani Highway, even though it wasn't discussed as a hot spot in this meeting.

XI. New business

The next MACZAC meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2025.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

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