

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

## MINUTES

Thursday, November 6, 2025: 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Hybrid format: Zoom and in-person at the Lāna‘i Public and School Library

555 Fraser Ave  
Lāna‘i City, HI 96763

[Link to the electronic video recording of the meeting:](#)  
[November 6, 2025 MACZAC Meeting Recording](#)

### ATTENDANCE

- **Members present (7):** Scott Sullivan, Robert (Bob) Nishimoto, Denver Coon, Rich Brunner, Will Sankey, Donna Brown, Kimbal Thompson, Taryn Dizon
- **Members absent (1):** Sylvia Yanagisako
- **Office of Planning and Sustainable Development/Coastal Zone Management (OPSD/CZM) staff present (10):** Chris Liu, Sarah Chang, Lisa Webster, McKenzie Lim, Ciera McQuaid, Sebastian Penate, Laura Morrison, Shichao Li, Debra Mendes, Mary Lou Kobayashi
- **Others present (10):** Hal Nordbloom, Jon Sprague, Kahana Sunset OAO, Keiki-Pua Dancil (Pūlama Lāna‘i), Nancy McPherson (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands), Taylor-Kaili McKenzie (O‘ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council), Alec Bernstein (ICF Inc. LLC), Hannah Thompson (ICF Inc. LLC), Kari Bogner (Lāna‘i Culture and Heritage Center), Diane Preza (Pūlama Lāna‘i)

### DISTRIBUTED MATERIAL

- MACZAC meeting agenda for November 6, 2025
- Draft minutes from July 25, 2025
- Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Report to MACZAC (November 6, 2025)

#### I. Call to Order

Chair Scott Sullivan called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm and facilitated round-table introductions of MACZAC members.

#### II. Approval of July 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as circulated.

#### III. Welcome from OPSD-CZM Manager

OPSD-CZM Manager Chris Liu welcomed everyone and thanked MACZAC members Denver Coon and Will Sankey for helping with travel and meeting logistics. Lisa

Webster has also moved to another role within the CZM Program and will no longer be a part of the MACZAC Coordinator group.

#### **IV. CZM Program Report including funding, focus areas, and project updates**

##### **National Initiatives**

###### **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) - Capacity Building for Habitat Protection and Restoration**

There are currently no updates on the awards for the competitive Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. However, IIJA Project Coordinator Kristi Kimura is working with a variety of groups for capacity building through the non-competitive BIL funding.

##### **Hawai‘i CZM Program**

###### **MACZAC Representative Vacancies**

There are currently still three vacancies for the islands of O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, and Moloka‘i. The MACZAC Coordinators have prepared recruitment materials for environmental law faculty at the William S. Richardson School of Law, the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, and social media.

###### **2020 Ocean Resources Management Plan Implementation**

###### **Regional Shoreline Management**

As a part of the Pili Nā Moku Pilot Projects, CZM is assembling a Project Team to conduct community participatory mapping workshops across three moku. The Project Team will include a Statewide Facilitator and Regional Facilitators.

###### **Hawaiian Estuaries Viewer**

CZM is collaborating with DAR to develop the statewide Hawaiian Estuaries Viewer. A new contract is being finalized to work with Esri staff to design and develop the Viewer, with the project anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2025.

###### **Watershed Coordination Map**

CZM is developing a GIS map of organizations and agencies across the islands working on watershed-based restoration activities. The purpose of this map is to visualize mauka-makai stewardship efforts and to strengthen coordination amongst groups. This project is a part of a 5-year Ocean Resources Plan under the CZM’s Section 309 Assessment and Strategy with NOAA.

Link to full CZM Report to MACZAC: [November 6, 2025 CZM Report to MACZAC](#)

#### **V. Discussion on MACZAC Priorities (non-action item)**

The CZM Program has been able to align MACZAC Quarterly Meetings with island-by-island site visits to get a chance to see partner and non-profit organizations on the ground work throughout 2025. As the new year approaches, MACZAC is beginning to think about its priorities for 2026. The MACZAC is able to advocate for the CZM

Program to the Legislature, and one of the ways this can be done is through advocating for several types of projects using Green Fee funds.

**VI. Discussion led by MACZAC Coordinators on letter of support for selected green fee projects to be presented to the Legislature (non-action item)**

*McKenzie Lim, MACZAC Coordinator, CZM Program Project Support Specialist*

In planning for the next legislative session, projects funded by the new Green Fee will be discussed by the Legislature. One priority for MACZAC next year is advocating for which types of projects they want to see implemented with this landmark legislation.

The Green Fee was established by Act 96, signed into law on May 26, 2025. It ensures Hawai'i's environment, resilience, and visitor experience are strengthened through new dedicated funding. It is a portion of the Transient Accomodations Tax (TAT). Revenues of this portion of the TAT will be used to fund environmental conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable tourism.

Green Fee funds can be used for projects that fall within three buckets. Each category will receive the same amount of Green Fee funds to ensure equitable prioritization.

- Environmental Stewardship: Initiatives that protect Hawai'i's land and aquatic resources or preserve native flora and fauna.
- Climate & Hazard Resilience: Initiatives that harden infrastructure or mitigate wildfire and flood risks.
- Sustainable Tourism: Initiatives that support destination management, beach nourishment and park improvements.

The Green Fee Advisory Council was appointed by Governor Josh Green. Their timeline from September to November 2025 includes developing clear criteria to evaluate potential funding priorities with a focus on impact, feasibility, cost, and alignment with the intent of the legislation. From November to December 2025, the Council will provide the Governor with a prioritized list of recommendations, along with an accompanying budget for inclusion in the Executive Supplemental Budget. By January of 2026, the recommendations will be considered by the Legislature as part of the State's annual budget process. The Legislature ultimately determines the appropriation of Green Fee funds.

Since recommended projects are still unknown, the CZM Program would like to hear from MACZAC members about which types of subcategories within the existing project areas would be most beneficial to advocate for. Once subcategories are decided, MACZAC member Denver Coon will draft a letter of support to the Legislature listing which types of projects MACZAC advocates for. This letter of support will be up for approval by the MACZAC at the next quarterly meeting.

The CZM Program has identified some potential subcategories based on some of its current initiatives including:

- Projects that fund cesspool conversion
- Outreach to encourage and inform homeowners on cesspool conversion

- Coral reef restoration projects
- Wetland restoration projects that improve water quality and mitigate flood impacts
- Projects that consider mauka-muliwai-makai connections

MACZAC member Scott Sullivan pointed out that this Green Fee funding is going to be competitive and that coming up with types of projects is going to take some thinking. Mr. Sullivan expressed concern over the coming years for the State's coastlines due to climate change and sea level rise. Mr. Sullivan would like to see prioritization for the State's shorelines since all beaches and shorelines will not be able to be saved. Adaptation strategies should be formulated for the State's shorelines.

MACZAC member Denver Coon agreed with the CZM Program's identification of categories, while questioning how specific they must be. CZM Program staff McKenzie Lim explained the intent is to have subcategories within the already identified project buckets. Ms. Lim explained the need for broader subcategories and clarified that MACZAC does not need to come up with specific project proposals. CZM Program Manager Chris Liu explained the process following the identification of subcategories. The MACZAC Coordination Team will go through the proposed projects in the Supplemental Budget and place them under the approved subcategories. This allows for a quicker letter of support approval process in February. Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Liu if this is something the MACZAC should form a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) for. However, because of the time constraint, Mr. Liu suggested approval of subcategories at the current meeting. Mr. Sullivan inquired about who comprises the Green Fee Advisory Council. Ms. Lim responded that the Council is comprised of several hotel executives as well as non-profit group executives. Ms. Lim also noted that she would share the website that has information on the Council.

CZM Program staff member Ciera McQuaid informed members that if they needed to discuss the subcategories further, MACZAC members can contact the MACZAC Coordination team and set up a time to meet further. Mr. Sullivan pointed out that he is not yet informed enough, Ms. Lim will send links for the webinar recording and the Green Fee website hub. MACZAC members explained that with more time next year, a PIG can be formed to have a more formal, in-depth conversation over Green Fee funded projects.

Mr. Coon made a motion to approve the Green Fee subcategory list and MACZAC member Rich Brunner seconded the motion to approve. The MACZAC voted to approve the subcategory list.

Mr. Coon made a motion to approve the subcategory list with the inclusion of Mr. Sullivan's subcategory of "projects that fund adaptation strategies and pathways for public shorelines and beaches". Mr. Will Sankey seconded the motion to approve the subcategory inclusion. The MACZAC voted to approve the revised motion.

## **VII. Presentation: Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment Tool**

### *ICF Inc. Project Staff*

CZM Program staff member Sarah Chang introduced the State's Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment Tool which stemmed from Act 178, SLH 2021. In 2021, Act 178 was passed as an unfunded mandate to the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD). OPSD conducted a facilities inventory to get a sense of the State's assets. State agencies don't have a centralized database that tracks their assets. OPSD then took this inventory and ran a simple exposure analysis to see which State facilities were exposed to sea level rise. In 2022, OPSD conducted a literature review of mechanisms used in other coastal states and municipalities to assess infrastructure vulnerability to sea level rise. Through the literature review, OPSD found that there is a broad range of guidance, best management practices, and specific checklists for various types of infrastructure. In Hawai'i specifically, the State already has various types of guidance for sea level rise such as the Hawai'i SLR Vulnerability and Adaptation Report and Climate Change Priority Guidelines. The Act 178 Action Team and OPSD felt that a specific tool would be more useful. In 2024, OPSD began a contract with ICF to develop a standardized vulnerability assessment methodology and tool. This tool will be made available to all State agencies so that they can assess their own assets' vulnerability to sea level rise. This past year, OPSD and ICF have been working to develop a methodology, an accompanying tool, and guidance for adaptation planning. There has been extensive outreach and testing with agencies to make sure that there is buy in to using the tool as well as making it usable and relevant to current guidance.

Alec Bernstein, ICF project management staff introduced himself as well as his colleague Hannah Thompson. The Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SLR-VAT) is a series of questions to assess an individual State-owned building to its vulnerability to sea level rise. The tool has been designed for State-owned buildings, but can be used for any other building (ie. private home). A building is defined as a structure with a wall and or a roof. The tool is not designed for other types of utilities such as roads or campsites. The tool is available as a static PDF or digital Microsoft Form which allows for answers to be automatically populated and scored on the backend. The SLR-VAT is designed to be user friendly and take about 15-20 minutes to complete by someone who is fairly familiar with the building.

In designing the tool, ICF and OPSD wanted to ensure a user-friendly design, applicability to various building types, integrated data sets and tools, ensure that the tool can be easily updated, and use a tech-forward approach. Bernstein reiterates the user guide and mentions a recorded training session that users can refer to for instructions, more details about each question, further background, and brief tutorials for associated tools. Most importantly there will be additional resources for users to learn how to integrate adaptation pathways into their planning processes.

Next Bernstein explained the tools methodology. The tool allows users to assess a building's vulnerability through an in-depth screening process. This process includes an exposure assessment, sensitivity assessment, adaptive capacity assessment, criticality factor, and additional considerations. The outcome of this assessment provides a

building's vulnerability score, adaptation priority score, and qualitative information to support adaptation planning and prioritization.

The Exposure Assessment evaluates coastal flooding history, inundation depth, and proximity to the coastline to generate a total exposure score. The Sensitivity Assessment considers damage level, system dependencies, building condition, and building age, which together produce a sensitivity score. The Adaptive Capacity Assessment examines whether the building is designed to be flood-resilient, the presence of engineered or temporary protections, functional redundancy, and potential cascading impacts to calculate the adaptive capacity score. A Criticality Factor is then assigned based on categories that identify whether the building is functionally important to the community.

These components together determine the Adaptation Priority Score. The vulnerability score, calculated from the exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity scores is multiplied by the Criticality Factor to produce the final adaptation priority score, which supports planning and prioritization of necessary resilience actions. The results can identify "hot spots" across agencies, allowing the state to focus on the most vulnerable areas where multiple interests overlap. Bernstein then explained how the vulnerability scores and color-coded ratings can guide adaptation planning across an agency's building portfolio. Buildings with similar exposure may differ significantly in sensitivity or criticality. For example, an office with ground-floor servers may be highly sensitive even if less exposed. The tool helps agencies identify not only which buildings are most vulnerable overall but also why, allowing adaptation measures to be tailored to each building's specific vulnerability profile.

Bernstein introduced "adaptation pathways" as a phased planning approach that supports decision-making under uncertainty and funding constraints. He illustrated how agencies might invest in high-cost measures for critical buildings, apply mid-cost measures to extend the life of more vulnerable structures before consolidating functions, and deploy low-cost measures for less vulnerable but important buildings.

Scott Sullivan asked about applicability of the tool for private homeowners. Bernstein confirmed the tool can be applied to any building, though single-building scores are more meaningful when compared across multiple assets, which may not be as common for private homes. Sarah Chang added the long term vision for this tool is to have it being incorporate into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) requesting process.

Shichao Li recommended clearly stating the tool's purpose and scope and including an appropriate disclaimer. Bernstein added that the tool was designed to be expandable, allowing OPSD to integrate additional hazards (e.g., wildfire) or asset types (e.g., underground utilities) in the future. In response to questions about real estate devaluation and insurance risk, OPSD clarified that economic valuation is not part of this first-phase assessment, which focuses on physical vulnerability.

Taryn Dizon raised a question about groundwater inundation, particularly in areas already experiencing tidal flooding. Bernstein and Sarah explained that current layers

(SLR-XA and NOAA passive flooding) do not yet fully capture groundwater inundation but that the tool can accommodate updated layers as they become available. Sarah Chang shared that the tool will officially launch around Thanksgiving, with guidance recommending reassessment every six years to align with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) cycle. OPSD will maintain access to agency results, enabling identification of cross-agency “hot spots” and opportunities for coordinated adaptation.

OPSD staff confirmed that counties may use the tool’s methodology and questions, and OPSD is available to support county implementation. MACZAC members noted the value of potentially integrating vulnerability assessments into permitting or statutory processes and expressed appreciation for the tool as a practical foundation for prioritizing resilience investments statewide.

## **VIII. Hotspots**

### **Lahaina Harbor**

Denver Coon provided an update on Lahaina Harbor recovery efforts. He attended a recent community meeting in Lahaina as part of his role on the Lahaina Harbor Working Group for the County’s Economic Recovery Commission. The County announced that limited commercial operations at Lahaina Harbor are planned to resume on December 15, 2025, contingent on the completion of restroom facilities currently under construction. Although there have been delays, the County anticipates the bathrooms will be ready by the reopening date. The Harbormaster’s office site has been cleared of debris, and the County has established plans for parking, signage, and fencing to secure sensitive areas.

Only a small number of commercial operators are expected to resume operations with additional operators coming online gradually throughout the first year. Initially, only operators with moorings outside the harbor will be able to operate, as harbor dock infrastructure remains under reconstruction. All vessels will temporarily rely on the main loading dock for fuel and water access.

Denver noted that while design plans for new docks existed prior to the fire, the timeline for reconstruction remains long-term. The main wharf, including the primary loading docks, is anticipated to be completed in late 2026. The outer marginal wharf, which supports many of the small boat slips, is expected to be completed in late 2027. Because most small boat slips were located on the outer marginal wharf and because those docks were relatively new, having been replaced 10–15 years ago following the Japan tsunami, they were not included in earlier replacement plans and will be rebuilt later in the sequence.

He clarified that there are no changes to the number of commercial or recreational permits. Permit rules remain in effect, including the requirement that once a slip becomes available, permit holders have 120 days to place a vessel in the slip or the permit will be reassigned to the appropriate waitlist.

Denver concluded by noting that while harbor reopening represents a key economic milestone, the primary concern for Lahaina residents continues to be housing. Significant reconstruction of homes and community infrastructure is still needed to allow displaced families to return.

## **IX. Public Input on all agenda items**

(Public input was provided throughout the meeting.)

Nancy McPherson shared that the Hawaiian Homes Commission recently met on Lāna'i and is moving forward with additional homestead lots, including issuance of project leases for Phase 2B earlier this month. She noted ongoing concerns raised by beneficiaries regarding a drainageway running behind homes in the existing homestead area. During heavy rain, the drainageway transports significant amounts of soil downslope, ultimately reaching the ocean. Nancy also observed sediment plumes along the northwest coastline during an overflight, reflecting broader island-wide erosion issues linked in part to ungulate impacts. She emphasized the need for DHHL to coordinate with Pūlama Lāna'i to address erosion concerns, particularly where the drainageway is undermining the backs of lots in the Phase 1 homestead development.

Nancy highlighted the relevance of this issue given the Council's meeting on Lāna'i, noting that soil mobilized from as far upslope as Lāna'i City can reach the coast. Taryn agreed and shared similar observations from a recent visit, noting widespread sedimentation entering nearshore waters around the island. She recommended exploring available soil conservation plans or land management strategies to address the lack of vegetation cover and erosion control, which are contributing to extensive coastal sedimentation and degraded beach conditions.

Diane Preza a lifelong Lāna'i resident, shared additional perspectives on sedimentation and land degradation on the island. She noted that her home is located along the same drainage ditch referenced earlier, and during heavy rain events significant sediment is mobilized downslope, contributing to erosion behind homestead lots and ultimately reaching the coast. She emphasized that sedimentation is especially prominent along the island's windward side, where extensive land degradation has occurred due to decades of ungulate impacts. Diane explained that Pūlama Lāna'i, the Lāna'i Culture and Heritage Center, and partners such as NFWF are jointly working to restore approximately 20,000 acres on the east side, though progress is challenging due to long-term soil loss and vegetation decline.

She described ongoing efforts to manage ungulate populations through a stewardship hunting program operated by the Culture Center, which allows residents to hunt free of charge to help stabilize herd numbers. Community volunteers also participate in outplanting, weed control, and site stewardship, though permitting requirements under the island-wide SMA designation pose constraints for nonprofit-led restoration work along the coast. Diane reflected on the dramatic ecological changes observed over

generations, noting that older family members remembered white sand beaches in areas now dominated by sediment and mud. She emphasized ongoing challenges with soil stabilization, watershed protection, and the spread of invasive plants across the island.

Kari Bogner, from the Lāna'i Culture and Heritage Center, added that since the stewardship hunting program began in July 2021, residents and trained hunters have removed more than 3,700 ungulates from the 20,000-acre restoration area as of October 31, 2025. She described strong community participation in restoration events, cultural site stewardship, and native planting efforts. Kari noted that outreach to Lāna'i schools has been a key component of their work, helping students learn about the 'āina, native ecosystems, and the importance of mālama. Diane reiterated that while significant efforts are underway, the scale of degradation makes it difficult for community groups and organizations to keep pace.

## **X. New Business**

Chris Liu mentioned that MACZAC Coordinators will reach out to MACZAC members to schedule end of year one on one meetings. The next quarterly MACZAC meeting will be held on O'ahu in February.

## **XI. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.