

Coastal Management – Integrated State Erosion Management System

Problem Statement

Coastal zone responsibilities are presently scattered throughout various State departments. DOT is studying coastal highway protection, DLNR is concerned with the loss of sand beach resources, DOH oversees coastal water quality, the State Surveyor and the Land Board determine certified shorelines, OEQC reviews proposed coastal use and-or development projects, and the CZM Program also reviews proposed projects for consistency with Chapter 205A requirements. The result is that there are overlapping, redundant, and sometimes conflicting efforts being made by the different agencies, and no coordinated State program to deal with shoreline problems. Hawaii's coastal processes and shoreline dynamics are also complex functions of the natural forces of wind, waves, currents, sea level rise and island subsidence. Technical data and analysis is required in order to adequately evaluate problems and guide coastal decision making. At present, the State as well as the counties, lacks in-depth coastal engineering technical capability, and thus necessary technical input is often incomplete or missing in the coastal zone management process. In addition, what expertise and data is available is fragmented throughout various government agencies, and thus difficult to access. Information resources are not well disseminated or utilized.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Hawai'i legislature enact legislation that would create an Office of Marine and Coastal Affairs be created to consolidate coastal and shoreline responsibilities and functions presently scattered throughout other departments. This would permit consolidated, integrated and uniform planning and management of Hawaii's valuable and vulnerable coastal resources. Hawaii's coastal zone is directly linked to the economic and environmental well-being of the State. An ——— autonomous over-sight agency tasked with broad-based review, research and information collection, and education responsibilities is required to help manage the complex natural and social forces interacting in the coastal zone. An independent Office of Marine and Coastal Affairs, incorporating the CZM Program as well as all other existing directly related coastal responsibilities, would provide this capability. [Scott – which dept. would it be housed in, or would it remain in OP?] It should be available to serve as an information and review resource available to all State and County agencies. Creation of an Office of Marine and Coastal Affairs (OMCA) is recommended by the Hawaii Ocean Resources Management Plan (ORMP), and would facilitate implementation of the guideline in the Sate Coastal Erosion Management Plan (COEMAP). The OMCA should also be responsible for the creation of a comprehensive coastal information data base, identification of additional technical needs, and development of a plan for acquisition of additional technical information.

Hawaii's people and our visitors are intrinsically tied to our coastal lands and nearshore ocean waters. It is thus considered imperative that all possible effort be made to further sound shoreline management and preservation.