WHEREAS, Hawaii is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods, and droughts; and

WHEREAS, the State and counties are challenged to design, finance, construct, operate, and maintain various water infrastructure, including infrastructure for fresh water, waste water, and stormwater; and

WHEREAS, Waikiki generates approximately eight percent of Hawaii’s gross domestic product, seven percent of the State’s employment, and nine percent of state tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, a one percent annual chance exceedance flood event, or the "one-hundred-year flood", in the Ala Wai watershed, including Waikiki, would affect approximately 1,358 acres within the watershed and over 3,000 properties with an estimated $318,000,000 in structural damages alone; and

WHEREAS, in March 2006, as much as ten million gallons of raw sewage were dumped into the Ala Wai Canal following the rupture of a sewer line due to heavy rains, and as recently as August 2015, heavy rains caused a major sewage spill, forcing temporary closure of beaches in Waikiki; and

WHEREAS, as of May 2015, under Act 42, Session Laws of Hawaii 2015, the counties have the authority to establish and charge user fees to create and maintain any stormwater management system or infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the economic risk to the Waikiki area from a category 4 hurricane hitting Honolulu could result in an
estimated $30,000,000,000 in economic losses and structural
damages; and

WHEREAS, the state-sponsored United States Army Corps of
Engineers Ala Wai Canal Flood Mitigation Project (Ala Wai
Project) is only being designed to reduce riverine flood risks
from the one hundred-year flood in the Ala Wai watershed,
including Waikiki; and

WHEREAS, in addition to flood risk reduction, the original
scope of work for the Ala Wai Project also included ecosystems
restoration, water quality enhancements, and other community
benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with
the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, hosted and invited
participation by the public, private, philanthropic, and non-
governmental sectors in the January 2015 "Hawai'i Disaster Risk
Workshop: Mitigating Catastrophic Disaster Risk and Building
Resilience in the Ala Wai Watershed"; and

WHEREAS, the objectives of this workshop were to:

(1) Raise awareness of natural disaster risk and
vulnerability in the Ala Wai watershed, including the
economic and social consequences of a natural disaster
to Waikiki's residential, tourism, and business
communities;

(2) Examine options for mitigating risk and improving
community resilience through gray and green
infrastructure investments;

(3) Explore the opportunities to transfer disaster risk
from the government to private markets and leverage
public resources to catalyze private investment in
resilience through new partnerships; and

(4) Identify strategies to engage the community to create
shared value and build locally appropriate solutions
to urban design and ecosystem restoration; and
WHEREAS, an action agenda was agreed upon moving forward from the workshop into 2015, and the Ala Wai Watershed Partnership (Partnership) coalesced as the working group to further the five steps of the action agenda of the workshop; and

WHEREAS, the Partnership is a voluntary partnership of state, county, federal, business, and nongovernmental leaders from many sectors, including engineering, planning and design, flood mitigation and stormwater management, coastal hazards and climate change mitigation and adaptation, economic development, business, finance, insurance, social science, extension and education, philanthropy, and others, that is ready to support shared goals of increasing the resilience and sustainability of the Ala Wai watershed and Waikiki; and

WHEREAS, the Partnership and Ala Wai Project may help demonstrate how, as outlined in President Obama's Climate Action Plan, climate resilience can create shared value for local communities, mitigate the damage resulting from current and future climate-related events, and close the national infrastructure gap by leveraging innovative partnerships; and

WHEREAS, the Partnership and Ala Wai Project, as a result of Hawaii's social, cultural, and economic connections to small island developing states, may be a model for climate resiliency projects in the Pacific islands, Caribbean, and other regions facing increasing climate-related challenges; and

WHEREAS, the Partnership and Ala Wai Project could be featured at the United States-hosted 2016 International Union for the Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress in Hawaii as a high-level commitment to support resilient infrastructure investments through innovative financing and public-private partnerships, while also restoring and protecting critical watersheds; and

WHEREAS, a state commitment to the action agenda of the Partnership will help to:

(1) Ensure progress on the critical flood risk reduction objectives of the Ala Wai Project;
Reintegrate ecosystem restoration, water quality enhancements, and other community benefits into an Ala Wai Project scope;

Promote public-private partnerships that improve and sustain the ability of local governments to design, finance, construct, operate, and maintain various infrastructure;

Attract local, regional, national, and global attention to pressing infrastructure investment needs, while providing innovative design and community engagement to enhance resilience and sustainability in Hawaii;

Strengthen Hawaii’s partnerships with federal agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, United States Environmental Protection Agency, President’s Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and others; and

Serve as a model for complex infrastructure investments regionally and nationally; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016, the Senate concurring, that this body endorses and supports the Ala Wai Watershed Partnership and its integrated approach to increase resilience and sustainability in the Ala Wai watershed and Waikiki through five action steps, which include:

1. Continuing the Partnership’s efforts to increase awareness about catastrophic natural disaster risk, and facilitate stakeholder engagement in designing, funding, building, and maintaining integrated infrastructure systems that improve the resilience of vulnerable communities in the Ala Wai watershed and Waikiki;

2. Investigating insurance, reinsurance, and risk transfer solutions, including parametric insurance, to help mitigate current and future climate risks that
place substantial financial and political burdens on
the state economy and state and county governments;

(3) Investigating a community investment vehicle to align
public funds and catalyze private investment in
designing, building, and maintaining resilient
infrastructure;

(4) Investigating new and innovative financing strategies
for climate resilient infrastructure projects in the
Ala Wai watershed, including stormwater capture and
reuse, water efficiency measures, and insurance
premium securitization; and

(5) Coordinating a prize competition that connects local
and world-class urban planners, engineers, and
designers with business groups, policy makers, and
community leaders in the Ala Wai watershed to design
climate resilient infrastructure and support ecosystem
restoration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chair of the Ala Wai
Watershed Partnership is requested to submit a report on the
progress of the Ala Wai Watershed Partnership toward the action
steps and in raising financial support for the Partnership to
the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening
of the Regular Session of 2017; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the White House Council
on Environmental Quality; White House Office of Management and
Budget; Governor; Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu; and
United States Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District.