A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WATER SECURITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State is especially vulnerable to the impact of climate change. According to the 2014 report entitled "Climate Change Impacts in Hawai‘i: A summary of climate change and its impacts to Hawaii's ecosystems and communities" by the University of Hawaii sea grant college program, rainfall in the State declined over the last thirty years while global sea levels rose over the last century.

The legislature further finds that the State's freshwater supply is threatened by the intrusion of saltwater and the change in rainfall frequency and intensity. Both threats are the result of climate change.

It is projected that sea levels will continue to rise at an accelerated rate. The 2014 University of Hawaii sea grant college program report projected "a 1-3 foot (approximately 0.3-1 meter) rise, or more, by the end of the century." Rising sea levels, coupled with the resulting coastal erosion, inundates
the land with saltwater, and leads to contaminated freshwater
that is unable to recharge.

In addition, when precipitation decreases on islands,
freshwater becomes less available as ground and surface water
supplies are less likely to be recharged. The United States
Environmental Protection Agency observed "a trend for decreasing
precipitation" in the State and noted that "projections suggest
a small decrease in precipitation during the wet season and a
small increase during the dry season."

Lastly, the legislature finds that the state water code
under chapter 174C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, requires that the
commission on water resource management implement and use
comprehensive water resources planning in its protection and
management of the State's water resources. The water code
requires updates to the Hawaii water plan to guide the
commission on water resource management in executing its general
powers, duties, and responsibilities in assuring economic
development, good municipal services, agricultural stability,
and environmental protection.
The Hawaii water plan serves as a continuing long-range guide for water resource protection and management, and consists of five major components:

(1) The water resource protection plan, which is prepared by the commission on water resource management;

(2) The water quality plan, which is prepared by the department of health;

(3) The state water projects plan, which is prepared by the engineering division of the department of land and natural resources;

(4) The agricultural water use and development plan, which is prepared by the department of agriculture; and

(5) The county water use and development plans, which are prepared by each of the four counties.

The purpose of this Act is to direct the commission on water resource management to provide additional guidance for future Hawaii water plan updates by addressing emerging issues, such as climate change, and include any other useful or necessary elements to ensure the long-term protection and wise management of water resources.
SECTION 2. (a) The commission on water resource management shall conduct an update of the statewide framework for updating the Hawaii water plan to provide additional guidance for updating the Hawaii water plan.

(b) The tasks and elements of the statewide framework update shall include but not be limited to:

1. Facilitated interagency meetings with all agencies responsible for updating a component plan to identify information gaps that need to be filled to better integrate the components and coordinate water source developments between state, county, and private entities;

2. Consultation with federal, state, and county agencies having an interest in water resource science, protection, management, development, or use;

3. Inclusion of emerging issues in the county water use development plans, such as climate change, watershed protection, protection of public trust uses, and drought planning;

4. Comprehensive review and revision, as needed, of existing planning elements for each component plan;
(5) Extension of the planning horizon from twenty years to a longer time period; and

(6) Any other useful or necessary elements that are identified through the interagency meetings and consultation processes.

(c) The commission on water resource management shall submit its findings, recommendations, and progress reports on actions taken to the legislature no later than December 31, 2020.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 to carry out the purposes of this Act.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.
Report Title:
Hawaii Water Plan; Commission on Water Resource Management

Description:
Requires the Commission on Water Resource Management to conduct an update of the statewide framework for the Hawaii water plan to provide guidance for Hawaii's future water plan. Makes an appropriation.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.