



Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. As the governor's office works to become paperless, the newsletter will be available on-line and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe to this newsletter. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge for daily activities.

From the Governor: Toward a sustainable Hawai'i



Think global, act local. Never has that phrase meant more than now when the world's spotlight is on the islands for the first U.S.-based IUCN World Conservation Congress Sept. 1-10 at the Hawai'i Convention Center. This month's Capitol Connection focuses not only on the Congress itself, but also on work by the state and its community partners to protect the Hawai'i we love.

Q. What message do you hope local folks and visitors will take from the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i?

A. This event recognizes that our state has been at the forefront of conservation through partnerships statewide. The Congress can help to showcase the challenges of protecting endangered species and our natural resources as well as to focus on what Hawai'i is doing to plan for the future. We were one of the first states to create an Interagency Climate Adaptation Committee to look at planning guidelines because environmental impacts affect island communities more than others.

Q. What are some challenges to making progress on Hawai'i's sustainable goals?

A. I think our community understands that we all have a part to play in making the islands more self-sufficient. We just have to make sure that actions follow words. Our Aloha+ Challenge model (see story on this page), which we have committed to statewide, could be a model for others worldwide. It's what guides my **Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative**, which sets goals for natural resource management, clean energy transformation and local food production. We're the only state that is committed to 100 percent renewables, and as an island community we understand the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Aloha+ also guides our efforts to make Hawai'i more livable and diversify our economy.

Q. What do you want the public to know about work already being done by state departments to protect the environment?

A. It's important to understand how crucial it is to invest in resources for conservation and sustainability. If we were to be sustainable tomorrow, that's over \$6 billion we spend now on importing fossil fuel and food from outside Hawai'i that we could put to better use. Not only is sustainability good for the planet, but it has a direct impact on job growth and our state's future. Mālama 'āina, or caring for that which sustains us, lies at the core of Native Hawaiian values and connects to everything we do. We have a great opportunity to help everyone see that sustainability just makes sense for Hawai'i and the world.



Gov. David Ige with students at the Hawai'i Nature Center.

Aloha+ Challenge sets goals

The Aloha+ Challenge sets six targets to be reached by 2030 in sustainability, renewable energy and preservation of natural resources. Gov. Ige, the four county mayors, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the state Legislature all support these common goals.

"We're working to align department goals and the governor's sustainability initiatives under the umbrella of Aloha+ Challenge," said DLNR director Suzanne Case. "We want the IUCN Congress to be a platform to highlight and, where possible, launch significant initiatives to move all of that forward."

The areas include clean energy, local food production, natural resource management, waste reduction, sustainable communities, and green jobs and education. To monitor the state's progress, go to the Aloha+Dashboard at hawaiiingreengrowth.org.



A memorial at the Capitol for Congressman Mark Takai

Hawai'i Congressman Mark Takai, 49, was remembered in a moving ceremony Aug. 18 as a dedicated public servant, a champion of veterans and education, and a devoted family man. Many came to pay their respects as Takai lay in state in the Capitol courtyard.

Gov. Ige recalled how their lives had followed parallel paths, adding, "It was difficult for me to accept that Mark is no longer with us. I've truly lost a good friend and colleague."



(above) Governor Ige pays tribute to U.S. Rep. Mark Takai. (right) Parents Erik and Naomi, daughter Kaila, son Matthew and wife Sami take a moment to reflect after the memorial service.



James Gonser/HIHouseDems

Progress across the state

ESSA team continues work statewide

To meet growing demand, Governor Ige's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) team added two more town hall meetings — one on Aug. 22 at Waimea High School on Kaua'i and the other on Sept. 8 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Lāna'i High and Elementary School. Other September meetings are Sept. 7 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Maui High; also Sept. 7 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Castle High on O'ahu; and Sept. 14 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Moanalua High.



Participants discuss ideas at an ESSA town hall meeting at Kalani High School.

Turnout and interest continues to be high at the meetings, say the coordinators, as they gather feedback from students, parents, teachers, principals and community members on ways to improve public education in Hawai'i. Anyone can go to the ESSA section of the governor's home page at governor.hawaii.gov to respond to design ideas and read summaries of the discussions so far. Once the statewide town hall meetings are finished, the ESSA team will provide its recommendations to the Hawai'i Department of Education and the Board of Education for discussion as part of the DOE's long-range strategic plan.



Gov. David Ige, Mayor Kirk Caldwell and DOT officials at 'School Jam' press conference.

DOT takes steps to 'Beat the School Jam'

O'ahu commuters got some relief with several projects designed to keep traffic moving now that school is back in session. Governor Ige and Department of Transportation (DOT) officials announced several simpler traffic fixes as lower-cost alternatives to more expensive, large-scale highway projects.

Among the projects are a new shoulder lane in Kunia, a second Zipper lane from the H1/H2 merge to Pearl Harbor, a Farrington Highway contraflow, and adjustments in High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane hours. The "Beat the School Jam" campaign includes radio commercials reminding people to plan ahead and use free traffic tools and apps such as MyGoAkamai, a free personalized alerting service tailored to your driving route.

NEWS UPDATES

The state Department of Health (DOH) identified the likely source of the hepatitis A outbreak and continues monitoring—DOH temporarily closed Genki Sushi restaurants on O'ahu and Kaua'i after identifying raw scallops served there as the likely source of the hepatitis A virus. Check health.hawaii.gov for regular updates and information on getting vaccinated.

Section 8 waiting list opened for the first time in a decade – The Hawai'i Public Housing Authority accepted applications in August for low-income housing vouchers, with priority given to the homeless, victims of domestic abuse, and individuals and families involuntarily displaced from their homes.

State reaches agreement with United Public Workers union to proceed with Maui hospitals transition – The transfer of three state-run Maui County hospitals to Kaiser Permanente can proceed, based on a settlement reached between the state and the United Public Workers union.



Hawai'i Island residents discussed issues with Gov. Ige and several state department heads at the Aug. 9 Community Connection meeting at UH-Hilo. The next Community Connection is planned for Wednesday, Oct. 5 at UH Maui College.

Taking care of Hawai'i — from the mountains to the sea

The 2016 World Conservation Congress provides a global stage to highlight the work Hawai'i's state agencies, together with community partners, do every day. The message is simple: Conservation is everyone's kuleana.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources is the agency entrusted with protecting the state's vast natural, cultural and historic resources while overseeing their use in a sustainable way. It includes 10 divisions — “from the mountains to the sea,” says director Suzanne Case — and some 900 employees.

DLNR's mission statewide ranges from protecting watersheds, endangered plants, animals and marine life to stemming the decline of near-shore fisheries and coral bleaching. It also partners with the state's agriculture and health departments on biosecurity issues and guarding against invasive species. With the help of UH researchers, public-private partnerships and a growing community-based conservation network, DLNR is finding new ways to preserve the state's natural resources.

Along with DLNR, another key agency critical to the success of the governor's Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative is the **Department of Agriculture** (HDOA) - The department's 240 employees work to promote and protect Hawai'i's agriculture and aquaculture industries as well as maximize existing and new agricultural products. As part of the Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative, the department is developing an interagency biosecurity plan to manage the risk from invasive species to protect the state's environment, health and economy. The first draft of this new plan will be unveiled at the World Conservation Congress. **(See October's Capitol Connection for more on HDOA and the biosecurity plan.)**

“We need to increase our resources and address the threat of invasive species if the state is going to be proactive toward food sustainability and animal and plant diseases,” said director Scott Enright.

Partnering to protect vital watersheds

Colleen Cole and Cheyenne Perry don't wear capes or wield superpowers. But they're environmental heroes just the same, doing the kind of boots-on-the-ground work that protects the state's vital forested watersheds and maintains our supply of fresh water.

Cole from the Three Mountain Alliance and Perry from the Mauna Kea Watershed Alliance are among 10 watershed coordinators on five islands that comprise the Hawai'i Association of Watershed Partnerships. They're a grassroots network of 74 public and private agencies and landowners who decided to join forces to work more effectively together — using state, federal and private grants and resources to protect their watersheds.

They say the challenge is that a little over 1 percent of the entire state budget is allocated to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and even less than that for the Department of Agriculture, to protect millions of acres of land and water resources. “We're looking for ways to make our funding more stable over the long-term,” said Perry. “The state's funding is seed money. We can leverage that with grants and other resources, but we could be doing much more.”

The coordinators bring people from their communities together to decide on priorities and strategies to manage the ecological issues in their area — especially involving biosecurity threats such as little fire ants or rapid 'ohia death. Both Cole and Perry want to see Hawai'i become a leader in solving conservation issues. “We're such a microcosm for what's happening in the world. We're kind of the canary in the coal mine,” said Perry. “You have to think about how the ecosystem works as a whole, the relationships, because everything is connected. If you're messing up stuff mauka, that affects your coastal environment.”

The coordinators say they love their work and want others to understand the need to protect what we often take for granted. “In conservation, we tend to be doom and gloom,” said Cole, “but we've had a lot of successes, too. People should be very proud that Hawai'i has been progressive in our conservation solutions. It's an investment in our community's future.”



“Our natural world is a gift with limits. We must carefully steward this gift if we are to survive together.”

— Governor David Y. Ige

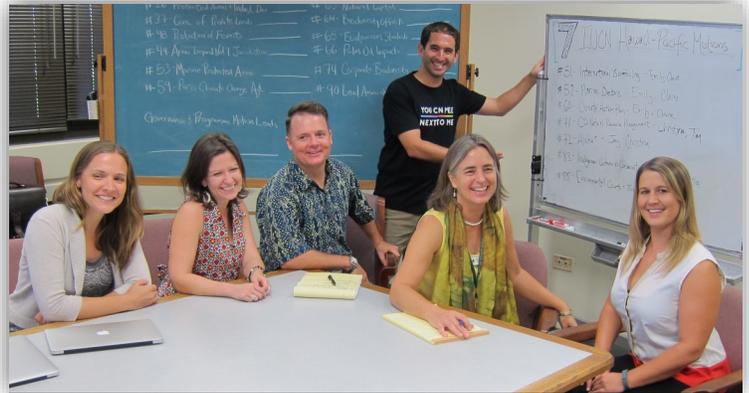


Coordinators Cheyenne Perry and Colleen Cole.

'Made in Hawai'i' motions call for local, global action

For UH associate dean Denise Antolini's environmental law students and others across the state, the IUCN's World Conservation Congress is the "opportunity of a lifetime." It's a chance to make their voice heard through seven "homegrown" motions that could help chart a local and global environmental course for generations to come.

The motions, developed through discussions with local environmental groups and state agencies, include calls for global action on marine debris, preventing biofouling (the spread of invasive marine organisms), developing a Pacific Region climate change action plan, promoting community-based natural resource management, using the Aloha+ Challenge model for sustainable growth, creating environmental courts, and valuing indigenous approaches to conservation. The motions are among 86 from other IUCN members worldwide.



TEAMWORK: (from left) Jennifer Eick, Christina Lizzi, Tim Vandever, Jay Parasco, Denise Antolini and Emily Gaskin worked on seven IUCN Hawai'i motions, along with Claire Colegrove.

Participants hope the momentum generated by the Congress will result in action at a policy level. "The Congress is a wonderful, amazing blend of governments and organizations all debating cutting-edge conservation issues," said Antolini. "At the international level, this kind of 'soft law' can lead to real government action. For example, we would not have laws to protect endangered species in Hawai'i and the U.S. if it weren't for the IUCN."

Antolini praised her students for their work with community partners that went far beyond regular classroom requirements. The process also encouraged collaboration in a big way. "When our motion on marine debris was merged with a similar one from the government of Australia, we realized our firepower tripled," she said. "We were dealing on an equal footing with a major world government on something of common interest that impacts both Hawai'i and Australia – and of course the Pacific as a whole."

Paradise lost? Preparing for sea level rise

It could be a scene from a Hollywood movie: Waikiki Beach and other coastlines flooded, thousands of homes threatened, roads and sea walls crumbling. But this scenario is real for Hawai'i, based on the latest climate change predictions. In fact, Hawai'i and other parts of the Earth are already seeing the effects of rising sea levels – a by-product of global warming.

That's why the state's **Interagency Climate Adaptation Committee (ICAC)** is developing a statewide report to inform government leaders, the private sector and coastal communities about the consequences of rising seas. The report, due by December 2017, will also describe possible adaptation measures. "The impacts of climate change will have dramatic effects on Hawai'i's economy, health, environment and way of life. It's important we consider them as early as possible so we can adjust or avoid the effects," said Sam Lemmo, administrator of the DLNR Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands and ICAC co-chair, along with the director of the Office of Planning.

He encouraged the public to learn more about the issues by going to the new Hawai'i Climate Adaptation Portal at climateadaptation.hawaii.gov. The site features the latest climate change news from around the world, Hawai'i initiatives and updates on ICAC's work. Lemmo said the committee is working on detailed maps to show the state's most vulnerable areas for erosion and flooding in 2030, 2050, 2075 and 2100, how it will affect coastal areas and, ultimately, our way of life.

"We have to ask, 'At what point do we stop building in these vulnerable areas along the coastlines? How do we prioritize the movement of critical infrastructure and people over the next few decades?' We could adapt by building bigger sea walls to buy time or undertake a 'managed retreat' and not build along a shoreline," Lemmo said. "We can also continue to reduce our carbon footprint by moving to renewable energy, driving smaller or electric cars, and finding ways to be more energy self-sufficient."

Lemmo said people need to accept that the planet cannot support unlimited growth. The ICAC and the Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation teams are designing a blueprint for sea level rise adaptation that they hope will provide the impetus to take action. He added, "It's ironic that by creating this modern, industrialized civilization we're imperiling our own future. That's why we're planning now."



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