



# PACIFIC ISLANDS

## CLIMATE ADAPTATION SCIENCE CENTER

2525 Correa Road, HIG 238  
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February 7, 2022

Dear Members of the Natural Resources Committee, US House of Representatives,

**I write you in strong support of the Climate Adaptation Science Centers Act (CASC Act).** As director of the Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center (PI-CASC), I have observed the positive impacts of cutting-edge actionable science developed through the regional and national CASCs, which is improving management and stewardship of our natural and cultural resources in federal, state, and local arenas, by informing sustainability and climate adaptation for ecosystems and the communities they support.

As with each regional CASC, PI-CASC is a collaborative partnership between the US Geological Survey and a consortium of universities. PI-CASC is hosted by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, which has a deep commitment to sustainability and environmental conservation and, as a Land and Sea Grant university, is well-versed in supporting stakeholder-driven and actionable science through cooperative efforts between researchers, managers, and communities. Our university consortium serves resource managers and communities throughout Hawai'i and the US-Affiliated Pacific Islands and includes the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and the University of Guam. We partner closely with the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program.

Funds are provided from the US Geological Survey to the PI-CASC university consortium to support these activities. Annually, the PI-CASC consortium leverages federal dollars 3:1 in additional funds in support of climate adaptation science in our region.

The CASC Act, is a draft bill being introduced by Congressman Grijalva of Arizona, Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee. Chair Grijalva is holding a hearing on the bill within the committee, on February 17 at 1 pm (EST).

The most important function of this bill is to establish the CASCs in law, to create consistency and continuity of the centers across changes in administrations. Currently, the centers are established by secretarial orders which can be rescinded by any secretary of the interior (as has happened to other climate-focused federal programs). Congressional authorization is important for consistency of research, education, and training programs, as well as for continuity in the services the CASCs provide to partners.

Additionally, the CASC Act will:

- Reinstatement of the Federal Advisory Committee to better coordinate and inform science across the regional CASCs.
- Authorization of appropriations, which would provide long-term stability of funding for the CASC network.
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- Increase flexibility to conduct new research, provide education, mentor students, and work with other agencies and institutions.
- Create consistent and timely grant processing.
- Introduce an evaluation process based on performance, which allows the CASCs to focus on building long-term partnerships.

The CASC Act will allow PI-CASC, our fellow regional CASCs, and the national CASC program the stability and flexibility to directly address unmet needs of natural and cultural resource managers by helping us to generate actionable climate science, turn research results into useable products, and focus on regional capacity building for an informed workforce of government officials and community leaders in America.

Sincerely,

Darren T. Lerner, PhD  
University Consortium Director



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