

Day 1 – Closing Plenary

Chris Benjamin, former CEO of Alexander & Baldwin, discussed his role in climate-related endeavors, including chairing Hawaii's climate advisory team and founding Climate Hawaii. He emphasized the importance of addressing climate change's health impacts, particularly mental health, and the need for community-driven solutions. The advisory team focuses on resilience, recovery, and financial implications of disasters, with a specific focus on residential resilience and infrastructure. Benjamin highlighted the challenges of insurance in Hawaii and the potential for a hurricane retrofit program. He also acknowledged the need for better coordination and funding to enhance disaster preparedness and resilience.

Action Items

- Engage in media outreach to raise public awareness and urgency around climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness.
- Conduct polling to understand public perceptions on climate change and potential actions.
- Vet policy recommendations with legislators and identify actions that can be taken in the next legislative session.
- Improve coordination among state agencies, counties, and local communities to optimize climate adaptation and disaster response efforts.
- Support and provide more funding to local communities to enhance their resilience and recovery capabilities.
- Explore economic models and strategies to make property insurance more accessible and affordable for Hawaii residents.

Outline

Introduction and Acknowledgments

- Judy Kern thanks the final team for their hard work and expresses hope that the attendees found the meeting inspiring and beneficial.
- Judy Kern introduces Chris Benjamin, highlighting his background in climate-related endeavors and his role in the Hawaii climate advisory team.
- Chris Benjamin is introduced as the former CEO of the Alexander involvement, now dedicated to climate-related work.
- Chris Benjamin humorously mentions his retirement activities, including sailing to Palmyra and his involvement in climate work inspired by Chip Fletcher.

Chris Benjamin's Involvement in Climate Work

- Chris Benjamin shares how he got involved in climate work, inspired by a presentation at the Hawaii Executive Collaborative.
- He co-founded the Hawaii Executive Collaborative Climate Coalition, now renamed to Climate Hawaii.
- Chris Benjamin was later asked by the governor to chair the climate advisory team to develop policy recommendations for disaster resilience.
- He emphasizes the importance of addressing the health impacts of climate change, both physical and mental.

Climate Hawaii and the Climate Advisory Team

- Chris Benjamin explains the mission of Climate Hawaii, which is to foster collaboration among diverse groups for a sustainable climate future.
- The climate advisory team focuses on disasters, resilience, recovery, and the financial impacts of disasters.
- Chris Benjamin highlights the importance of community-driven solutions and the role of local communities in disaster preparedness.
- He discusses the composition of the climate advisory team and their focus areas, including resilience and recovery.

Challenges and Focus Areas of the Climate Advisory Team

- Chris Benjamin outlines the four broad areas the team is focusing on: resilience, recovery, physical and social health, and financial impacts.
- He emphasizes the importance of infrastructure, particularly homes, in disaster resilience.
- The team is working on strategies to make Hawaii more insurable and accessible for homeowners.
- Chris Benjamin discusses the challenges of insurance in Hawaii and the need for better experience to lower premiums.

Community-Driven Solutions and Coordination

- Chris Benjamin stresses the importance of community-driven solutions and the role of local communities in disaster preparedness.
- He acknowledges the limitations of government solutions and the need for community empowerment.
- The team is working on improving coordination among state agencies, counties, and local communities.
- Chris Benjamin highlights the need for better funding and support for local resilience initiatives.

Insurance and Housing Vulnerabilities

- Chris Benjamin discusses the challenges of insurance in Hawaii and the need for better experience to lower premiums.
- He mentions the old condo insurance issue and its impact on multi-family buildings.
- The team is exploring strategies to make Hawaii more insurable and accessible for homeowners.
- Chris Benjamin emphasizes the importance of residential resilience and the need for better infrastructure.

Health and Mental Health Impacts of Climate Change

- Chris Benjamin acknowledges the significant health impacts of climate change, both physical and mental.
- He discusses the emotional and psychological impacts of climate change and the importance of mental health support.
- The team is working on incorporating mental health considerations into their recommendations.
- Chris Benjamin encourages collaboration with healthcare experts to address these issues.

Preparedness and Recovery for Compounding Disasters

- Chris Benjamin discusses the challenges of preparing for compounding and cascading disasters.
- He emphasizes the need for comprehensive preparedness plans that consider multiple impacts at once.
- The team is modeling the potential for multiple impacts and incorporating these considerations into their recommendations.
- Chris Benjamin highlights the importance of addressing mental health and other long-term impacts of disasters.

Collaboration and Support from State Agencies

- Chris Benjamin encourages collaboration with state agencies like DHS and DOH to address vulnerabilities.
- He discusses the importance of coordination among state agencies, counties, and local communities.
- The team is working on improving coordination and support for local resilience initiatives.
- Chris Benjamin emphasizes the need for better funding and support for local resilience efforts.

Final Thoughts and Call to Action

- Chris Benjamin emphasizes the importance of community-driven solutions and the role of local communities in disaster preparedness.

- He acknowledges the limitations of government solutions and the need for community empowerment.
- The team is working on improving coordination among state agencies, counties, and local communities.
- Chris Benjamin encourages continued collaboration and support for local resilience initiatives.