

Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force

MINUTES

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

1:00 PM

Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

ATTENDANCE

Members Present (14):

1. Mary Alice Evans, Director, Office of Planning as Chair of the Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force
2. Christian Giardina, U.S. Forest Service on behalf of the Chair, Board of Land and Natural Resources
3. Pradip Pant, Statewide Transportation Planning Office on behalf of the Director, Department of Transportation
4. Michael Madsen, DOH Clean Air Branch on behalf of Deputy Director, Department of Health, Environmental Health Administration
5. David Forman, Director, Environmental Law Program, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, WSR School of Law
6. Leah Laramée on behalf of Administrator, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, DLNR
7. Justine Nihipali as a Member of the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission
8. Susan Crow as researcher from College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
9. Jonathan Deenik as extension agent from College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
10. Riley Saito as the Mayor's Representative, County of Hawai'i
11. Chane "Makale'a" Ane as the Mayor's Representative, County of Maui
12. Melissa Miyashiro of the Blue Planet Foundation as the Legislative Representative, Environmental Non-Profit
13. Ashley Lukens of the Frost Family Foundation as the Legislative Representative, Environmental Non-Profit
14. Alan Gottlieb of the Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council as the Legislative Representative, Agriculture/Ranching Association

Members Absent (5):

1. Earl Yamamoto, Department of Agriculture on behalf of the Chair, Board of Agriculture
2. Marianne Rossio, DOH Clean Air Branch on behalf of Director, Office of Environmental Quality Control
3. Benjamin Sullivan as the Mayor's Representative, County of Kaua'i
4. Matthew Gonser as the Mayor's Representative, City and County of Honolulu

5. Bobby Farias of Hawai'i Meats as the Legislative Representative, Agriculture/Ranching Association

Office of Planning Staff Present: Danielle Bass, State Sustainability Coordinator; Brittany Key, Climate Ready Hawai'i OP VISTA.

Public Attendees:

Senator Chris Lee, Hawai'i State Senate; Raniele Reyes, Office of Hawai'i State Senator Mike Gabbard; David Rodrigues, State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation ; Charles "Chip" Fletcher III, University of Hawai'i- School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology; Nick Krueger, University of Hawai'i- Hilo; Aarin Gross, Conservation International- Hawai'i; Charley Ice, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Lee Smith, Hawaiian Electric; Nicole Galase, Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council; Kalisi Mausio, Hawai'i Farm Trails; Kimberly Willis, Our Children's Trust; Anukriti "Anu" Hittle, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Coordinator; Parker Kushima, Climate Ready Hawai'i VISTA; Diana Lopera, Climate Ready Hawai'i VISTA; James McCallen, Climate Ready Hawai'i VISTA; Sabrina Park, Climate Ready Hawai'i VISTA; Carolyn "Revere" Wood, Climate Ready Hawai'i VISTA; Cody Brooks, RTOInsider; genhill (Zoom username; attendee name not identified at meeting).

Distributed Material:

- Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force (GHGSTF) meeting agenda for February 16, 2021
 - Draft minutes for November 14, 2021 Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force meeting
 - "Accessing an Online Zoom Meeting" (instructions for downloading and using Zoom)
 - Conservation International Hawai'i's *Reversing Climate Change: A study of pathways through Hawai'i's natural & working lands*
 - Hawai'i Agricultural Research Center Soil Health Plan Pilot Project Year 1 final report
 - Office of Planning's *Feasibility and Implications of Establishing a Carbon Offset Program for the State of Hawai'i*
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I. Call to order public notice, quorum

Chair Mary Alice Evans, Director of the Office of Planning, called the meeting to order at 1:04pm. The Task Force’s February 16, 2021 meeting notice was published on February 5, 2021. A quorum of 14 members was present of this 19-member task force.

II. Welcoming remarks

AmeriCorps VISTA Brittaney Key was introduced as the Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force (GHGSTF) coordination assistant for this year. Chair Evans informed members that Ms. Key is from the inaugural Climate Ready Hawai’i VISTA cohort; furthermore, she is based at the Office of Planning’s newly established Statewide Sustainability Program where she would be providing increased capacity to support the Task Force.

Chair Evans, as Co-Chair of the Hawai’i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission which oversees the Climate Ready Hawai’i VISTA cohort, also briefly introduced the rest of the cohort to those in attendance (Parker Kushima, HSEO; Diana Lopera, DLNR; James McCallen, HSEO; Sabrina Park, DOH; and Carolyn “Revere” Wood, HSEO).

Ms. Key reminded attendees of Zoom best practices before the meeting continued. A link to instructions for using Zoom was posted online on the GHGSTF’s website before the meeting, and the document was distributed via the Zoom chat. Ms. Key also informed those in attendance that they could direct message her or State Sustainability Coordinator Danielle Bass on Zoom if assistance was needed. Task Force members were asked to keep their cameras on for transparency.

The procedure for public comments was announced: Chair Evans would ask Task Force members for questions or comments first, and then discussion would be opened to comment from the public for each agenda item.

III. Introduction of Task Force members and stakeholders

Task Force members and members of the public were invited to introduce themselves and their affiliation.

IV. Review and approval of November 14, 2019 meeting minutes

The minutes were approved as circulated.

V. Planning and discussion of GHGSTF mandates

1. Discussion and preparation for 2023 report

State Sustainability Coordinator Bass reminded members of the Task Force’s statutory mandates, per Hawai’i Revised Statutes (HRS) §225P-4, to submit a

draft report of the Task Force's findings and recommendations to the Hawai'i State Legislature and the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission no later than twenty (20) days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2023 and a final report no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2025.

The mandated requirements and objectives of the report were reviewed.

Chair Evans noted that the Task Force would not be receiving any appropriations this year from its only source of funding (the State's Energy Security Special Fund (ESSF), pursuant to Act 122, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2019), as these funds were redirected to the General Fund due to the economic crisis from the COVID-19 global pandemic. The challenges of fulfilling the Task Force's mandate without funding were acknowledged.

Chair Evans asked Task Force members if there were any questions about the mandate or the report. Task Force member Dr. Ashley Lukens asked State Sustainability Coordinator Bass about a report from the Office of Planning that was in progress at the time of the GHGSTF's November 14, 2019 meeting which related to the Task Force's objectives.

Chair Evans noted that the report Dr. Lukens was asking about was Agenda Item VI.3. (*Feasibility and Implications of Establishing a Carbon Offset Program for the State of Hawai'i*) and would be discussed later in the agenda.

No other questions or comments were raised from the Task Force or the public.

2. Discussion of Task Force members' respective organizations' work toward GHGSTF goals

Given the challenges previously noted, Chair Evans invited Task Force members to share if they were working on any projects in their respective organizations that could help the Task Force fulfill its mandate.

Task Force member Leah Laramée shared her association with the nonprofit U.S. Climate Alliance and that the University of Hawai'i had recently received a grant from this nonprofit for an assessment of land use in the state that would be relevant to the 2023 draft report. She also shared her office's ongoing work to contribute a pledge to the Trillion Trees joint venture through a statewide initiative.

Task Force member Dr. Pradip Pant asked Chair Evans if a carbon sequestration objective had been established yet based on the state's projected carbon emissions reductions, in order to meet the state's mandated carbon neutrality goal by 2045 (Act 15, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2018; see also HRS §225P-5).

Task Force member David Forman later clarified that the goal was to be “net-negative” by 2045, per the statute’s language to “sequester more atmospheric carbon and greenhouse gases than emitted.”

Chair Evans responded to Dr. Pant’s question first by saying that the GHGSTF’s recommendations would be limited to sequestration capabilities in the farming, ranching, and natural lands sectors. While specific sequestration targets for these sectors had not yet been established, Chair Evans noted that several of the Task Force members were likely doing research related to determining these numbers. The question was turned over to the Task Force at large to respond.

Task Force member Dr. Susan Crow remarked that University of Hawai’i had at least nine ongoing research projects related to Dr. Pant’s question. However, Dr. Crow observed that it would take collaborative effort to pool data and research to fully answer the question of sequestration targets and inquired about the Task Force collating this information.

Chair Evans responded that this was part of the plan for the 2023 draft report to the legislature, to provide a summary of the Task Force members’ respective projects and the kinds of research taking place.

It was noted that the requirements for the 2025 final report would include baselines, data indicators, and metrics more aligned with answering Dr. Pant’s original question about sequestration targets.

Audience member Charley Ice noted that the State had data on greenhouse gas emissions and asked if there was similar data on sequestration, or how to obtain this data if the State did not have it. Because the Task Force had funded projects related to Mr. Ice’s question, the meeting segued to the next agenda item (“Project Updates”) in response.

VI. Project Updates:

Chair Evans introduced Task Force member Justine Nihipali to introduce the following projects.

1. Discussion of UH Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources project to develop a baseline and benchmarks

The GHGSTF appropriated funds in 2019 to UH Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) for a two-year project to develop data resources required to generate a baseline and short and long-term benchmarks for increasing greenhouse gas sequestration, soil health, and yields in natural and working lands in Hawai’i’s agricultural, forestry and other land uses (AFOLU) sector. The project is led by principal investigator Joshua Silva.

The scope of work is to collate available data and collect additional data resources for natural and working lands that will help lead to development of a decision support and planning tool. This tool will establish benchmarks for critical indicators of change in greenhouse gas sequestration from the AFOLU sector, as well as best management practices to support soil health, climate change mitigation, and yield in Hawai'i. The Task Force has received regular progress reports for this project and the final report for this project is due in March 2021.

Task Force member Nihipali invited Task Force member Dr. Crow to share any additional project updates on behalf of Mr. Silva. Dr. Crow noted that much of the project has been devoted to compiling and harmonizing available data resources and GIS map layers as well as determining what gaps remain after this compilation. She noted that some of the resulting products from this compilation are already being used in education outreach to farmers and ranchers.

The other focus of the research project has been on soil sample collection, particularly to fill in data gaps for land use changes and to establish benchmarks. Dr. Crow observed that this quantitative work would be relevant for the GHGSTF's report as per earlier discussion around sequestration targets.

There were no questions or comments from the Task Force or the public regarding this project.

2. Receipt and discussion of documents for completed GHGSTF projects:

Two of the Task Force's funded projects have concluded since the November 14, 2019 GHGSTF meeting, and the Task Force is officially in receipt of the following completed reports. Both reports were electronically distributed to all Task Force members, and a copy of each report is available on the Task Force's website for public review.

i. Conservation International Hawai'i desktop analysis to compare Project Drawdown pathways of carbon storage

Conservation International Hawai'i conducted a desktop analysis of the drawdown pathways to identify, analyze, evaluate, summarize, and compare key metrics, such as total potential carbon storage, cost per ton of carbon sequestered, etc., for the various greenhouse gas sequestration pathways specific to Hawai'i's natural and working lands and nearshore waters. The final report, *Reversing Climate Change: A study of pathways through Hawai'i's natural & working lands*, was completed and published in April 2020. Task Force member Nihipali thanked Conservation International Hawai'i for their work, and Chair Evans also expressed gratitude for their work and patience. Aarin Gross of Conservation International Hawai'i was in attendance as an audience member and thanked them for these acknowledgments.

Task Force member Nihipali commented that there were many data gaps that challenged Conservation International Hawai'i's ability to determine which drawdown pathways would be most ideal for Hawai'i. She recommended that the reports from UH CTAHR (once completed) and Hawai'i Agricultural Research Center (HARC) be compared against Conservation International Hawai'i's report to see if they could rectify any of those gaps.

There were no other comments or questions from the Task Force or public.

ii. Hawai'i Agricultural Research Center soil health plan pilot

The HARC soil health plan pilot project, led by principal investigator Jayme Barton, developed best management practices and tested carbon sequestrations capabilities in best management practices for healthy soils in Hawai'i. The purpose of this project was to support farmers and ranchers statewide in increasing their product yields and greenhouse gas sequestration in the State's agricultural and natural environments.

Chair Evans remarked that both completed reports would provide significant contributions for the 2023 draft report and it would be beneficial if Task Force members' future work were able to address some of the data gaps discussed.

There were no other comments or questions from the Task Force or public.

3. Receipt of Office of Planning's *Feasibility and Implications of Establishing a Carbon Offset Program for the State of Hawai'i* report

The Task Force acknowledged receipt of the Office of Planning's *Feasibility and Implications of Establishing a Carbon Offset Program for the State of Hawai'i* report. This report was conducted pursuant to Act 16, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2018 and was published in December 2019.

The report was electronically distributed to all Task Force members and is available on the Office of Planning's website for public review.

There were no comments or questions from Task Force members or the public.

VII. Legislative report

1. Report on 2020 legislation

Chair Evans reminded Task Force members that the Task Force did not receive funding from the 2020 legislative session and would need to rely on its members' expertise to meet its draft report mandate.

Task Force member Dr. Crow iterated her earlier remark that it would be a large, collaborative effort to compile existing data for the 2023 report and that additional support would be helpful. Task Force member Forman said that he could request from the UH WSR School of Law administration to count assistance with the GHGSTF's draft report as eligible for law students' required pro bono hours. If he were successful in this, he believed there would be several students interested in assisting with the draft report. Task Force member Dr. Christian Giardina added that the U.S. Forest Service had a lot of data and ongoing research relevant to the report, as well as several post-docs and graduate students on these projects who could help assemble information for the report. Task Force member Riley Saito also offered the support of the County of Hawai'i's AmeriCorps VISTA for data sharing and cooperation for the report.

2. Discussion of 2021 proposed legislation

Currently there are no bills introduced or sponsored by the Task Force. Chair Evans asked if there were any bills that members wanted to bring to the Task Force's attention. Task Force member Laramie recommended monitoring SB 493 ("Relating to Agriculture"), a bill which proposes to establish a carbon incentive program for farmers, ranchers, and foresters.

No other bills were recommended and there were no comments from the public.

VIII. Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs):

Chair Evans reminded Task Force members that three PIGs had been established by the Task Force so far. The Legal/Policy PIG was dissolved at the November 14, 2019 meeting, and Ms. Key was invited to introduce the remaining two PIGs for their reports of findings and recommendations to the Task Force.

1. Science PIG report on findings and recommendations

The Science PIG was formed at the February 28, 2019 Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force Meeting. It was tasked to:

- Guide and coordinate the development of baseline levels and changes in greenhouse gas sequestration, soil health status, best management practices, and co-benefits for participation in carbon markets
- Coordinate and consult with any other permitted interaction groups, as needed within the scope of its task and so long as there is not a quorum of the members of the Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force.
- With a deadline and deliverable date of February 28, 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Ms. Key noted that this was the first GHGSTF meeting past the Science PIG's deadline and deliverable date. Science PIG members (Giardina, Laramée, Crow, Deenik, Ane, and Gottlieb) were asked whether the group had met since February 28, 2019 and whether the PIG had any findings and recommendations to report to the GHGSTF.

Science PIG members did not meet since February 28, 2019 and did not have a report for the GHGSTF. Chair Evans recommended dissolving the Science PIG. Task Force member Dr. Giardina asked a question on the expiration and dissolution of PIGs, and Chair Evans clarified that a formal motion to dissolve the PIG was to ensure unambiguity on the matter. Task Force member Dr. Crow also asked a clarifying question on the continuance and/or reformation of PIGs, to which Chair Evans replied that while a similar PIG could be reformed after dissolution, the Sunshine Law (HRS Ch. 92) does not allow a PIG to function as a standing committee and it must be dissolved upon completion of its objective or past its deadline and deliverable date.

A motion was made by Dr. Crow to dissolve the Science PIG and was seconded by Task Force member Forman.

Chair Evans took the vote. The motion to dissolve the Science PIG passed with 14 yeas votes (Evans, Giardina, Pant, Madsen, Forman, Laramée, Nihipali, Crow, Deenik, Saito, Ane, Miyashiro, Lukens, and Gottlieb), with 5 excused (Yamamoto, Rossio, Gonser, Sullivan, and Farias) and zero nay votes.

2. Economics PIG report on findings and recommendations

The Economics PIG was formed at the February 28, 2019 Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force Meeting. It was tasked to:

- Develop an exploratory economic assessment of potential greenhouse gas sequestration pathways in agriculture, aquaculture, agroforestry, forestry, and urban forestry in Hawai'i in the context of broader statewide carbon mitigation goals and objectives.
- Coordinate and consult with any other permitted interaction groups, as needed within the scope of its task and so long as there is not a quorum of the members of the Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force.
- With a deadline and deliverable date of February 28, 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

It was reported by the Economics PIG that they met on March 14, 2019 from 10am-11:30am.

Ms. Key noted that this was the first GHGSTF meeting past the Economics PIG's deadline and deliverable date. Economics PIG members (Yamamoto, Giardina, Laramée, Gonser, Saito or Agibgay, Miyashiro, and Farias) were asked whether the group had met since March 14, 2019 and whether the PIG had any findings and recommendations to report to the GHGSTF. Economics PIG members did not meet since March 14, 2019 and did not have a report for the GHGSTF. Chair Evans recommended dissolving the Economics PIG.

A motion was made by Task Force member Forman to dissolve the Economics PIG and was seconded by Task Force member Saito.

Chair Evans took the vote. The motion to dissolve the Economics PIG passed with 14 yea votes (Evans, Giardina, Pant, Madsen, Forman, Laramée, Nihipali, Crow, Deenik, Saito, Ane, Miyashiro, Lukens, and Gottlieb), with 5 excused (Yamamoto, Rossio, Gonser, Sullivan, and Farias) and zero nay votes.

3. Discussion to consider forming new PIGs

Chair Evans noted that none of the three original PIGs had any findings to report and opened the floor to discussion about the need for PIGs or recommendations and ideas for new PIGs. It was emphasized that this would be a discussion only and no action would be taken at today's meeting to form new PIGs. However, Task Force members were encouraged to email Chair Evans, State Sustainability Coordinator Bass, and Ms. Key if they had PIG ideas for inclusion on the next meeting's agenda.

Task Force member Dr. Giardina raised a question about the need for new PIGs and the GHGSTF meeting schedule for 2021, particularly given the lack of funding. Chair Evans responded that a schedule had been set and would be discussed in Agenda item IX.1 ("Future meetings for 2021: May, August, November"). Regarding the lack of funding, Chair Evans acknowledged the legislature's tremendous challenge in the face of the COVID-19 economic crisis. Chair Evans was hopeful the Office of Planning would be in a position to request for GHGSTF funding next year but cautioned that it would depend on the speed of the state's economic recovery.

Task Force member Forman restated his position from the November 14, 2019 meeting that he supported the reformulation of the Legal/Policy PIG if other former PIG members were also interested, in order to take advantage of the Task Force's increased capacity with Ms. Key. The formation of a new Legal/Policy PIG will be on the next GHGSTF agenda for deliberation and action.

Task Force member Dr. Crow also expressed support for reforming the PIGs and asked if there was a legal template that Task Force members could reference in devising their proposals. Chair Evans responded that the Sunshine Law outlined

parameters for forming the PIG, but the specific charge of the PIG could be addressed through discussion at the next meeting. It was noted that a PIG's charges must be specific, but the high level of thoroughness in previous PIG charges was not in itself a legal requirement.

IX. Announcements

1. Future meetings for 2021: May, August, November

The meeting schedule for the Task Force this year was announced:

- Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 1:30pm;
- Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 1:30pm; and
- Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 1:30pm.

It was noted that their locations are to be determined due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Ms. Key also shared the meeting schedule in the Zoom chat.

There were no final questions or remarks from the Task Force or the public.

X. Adjournment

Chair Evans thanked Task Force members in closing for their important work and expressed optimism for the Task Force to achieve its goals. The meeting adjourned at 2:39pm.