

Too much is at stake for us  
to accept climate panel's  
'don't-worry' conclusions

Hawai'i needs to demand  
more research on global  
warming and hurricanes

# STORM WARNING

Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported that "there is no clear signal in the data that hurricanes will become significantly more numerous or stronger in Hawaiian waters due to climate change, although that may be only because of lack of data about Pacific storms."

As a lifelong professional research meteorologist engaged primarily in the specialty of cloud physics, I question the idea that global warming is not a particular concern regarding the frequency and strength of hurri-



## ISLAND VOICES

By Geoffrey E. Hill

canes entering Hawaiian waters.

To understand the possible connections between global warming and hurricanes, it will be helpful to first consider the effects of El Niño. Much is al-

ready known about that connection. To identify an El Niño, the sea surface temperature measured over an area straddling the equator in the eastern Pacific is used as an index. To qualify as El Niño, the average sea surface temperature must be half a degree Celsius (roughly 0.9 degrees Fahrenheit) or higher than

the long-term average for several months. In some El Niños, sea surface temperatures are as much as 2 C or 3 C (3.6 F or 5.4 F) higher.

A 1995 study found that nine tropical storms occurred in the six strongest El Niño periods,

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