FROM THE OFFICE OF

SENATOR STANLEY CHANG

East Honolulu Community Newsletter

September 2026

FILING CLAIMS AFTER HURRICANE LALA: ESSENTIAL NEXT STEPS FOR HAWAI'I RESIDENTS

If your home or property sustained damage, take the following steps to immediately protect your investment:

- Report the claim:
  Contact your insurance agent or company right away to file a report.
- Document everything:
  Take detailed photos and videos of all structural and personal property damage before moving debris.
- Keep every receipt:
  Save records of all storm-related expenses, including temporary repair materials, tarps, emergency lodging, and meals.
- Prevent further damage:
  Take reasonable, temporary steps to protect your property from more harm. Do not mark permanent repairs until an adjuster inspects the site.



Image Credit: Office of Senator Stanley Chang

In the wake of Hurricane Lala, Hawai'i residents are urged to immediately file insurance claims, and prepare emergency readiness. For more information, please visit the State's post disaster claims guide.

Key tip! Contact your insurance provider or your contract to know the type of insurance coverage that you have:

- **Hurricane Insurance**
  - Required by mortgage lenders for all homeowners in Hawai'i
  - Covers wind damage caused by a categorized hurricane
  - Covers water damage only resulting from hurricane wind damage (i.e, your roof blows off and rain comes in)
- **Flood Insurance**
  - Required for homes in flood homes:
  - Administered by National Flood Insurance Program or a private insurer
  - Covers flood damage, including strom surge or stream overflow from a hurricane

To see if your home is in a flood zone, please visit fhat.hawaii.gov. For insurance administered by the National Flood Insurance Program see floodsmart.gov.

More storms are expected to affect Hawai'i. The State of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu recommends that residents assemble a 14-day disaster supply kit. Living on an island means that it is extremely important to have a 14-day disaster supply kit. Unlike areas in the continental US, Hawai'i residents don't have the option to drive somewhere that hasn't been impacted when a hurricane happens. We must be ready with food, water, and emergency supplies in

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CALL US

808-586-8420

EMAIL US

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HANDY CONTACTS

State Pothole Hotline
808-586-7852

City Pothole Hotline
808-768-7777

State Homelessness
gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov
808-586-0193

City Homelessness
complaints@honolulu.gov
808-768-4381

Abandoned Vehicles
808-733-2530

Building Permits
808-768-8000

Poison Control
800-222-1222

Trash Collection
808-768-3200

Street Light Repair
808-768-5300

Domestic Abuse Hotline
800-799-7233

Public Assistance Information Line
855-643-1643

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case goods cannot be offloaded from ships, transportation on island is not available, or utilities are out.

Items should include:

- Emergency plan and contacts
- IDs and important documents
- Phone chargers and backup batter
- Water (1 gallon per person per day)
- Non-perishable food and can opener
- Radio (handcrank or with extra batteries)
- First aid
- Personal care and sanitation items
- Medications and glasses
- Whistle
- Waterproof flashlight and extra batteries
- Extra cash (small bills)
- Sturdy shoes and socks
- Mask (Dust, medical-grade, or particle)
- Pocket knife and/or tools
- Work globes
- Clothing and extra undergarments
- Comfort and entertainment items

For more information, please visit the City and County of Honolulu's website.

DISPOSABLE VAPE BAN AND MORE KEY HOUSING BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW

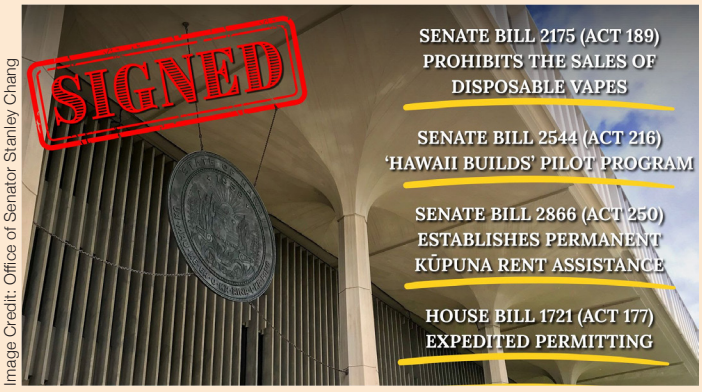


Image Credit: Office of Senator Stanley Chang

I am happy to share that Governor Green recently signed several new housing and consumer protection bills into law that were spearheaded by my office.

Senate Bill 2175 (Act 189)
Prohibits the Sales of Disposable Vapes

On July 7, Governor Green signed Senate Bill 2175, now Act 189, into law. Beginning on January 1, 2027, the new law prohibits the sale of disposable electronic smoking devices in the State. This law aims to protect the public and the environment from plastic pollution, lithium battery fire risks, and toxic chemical leaching. It will also help address the vaping epidemic among children in Hawai'i. Violation of this law can result in a fine up to $100 each day for every violation.

Senate Bill 2544 (Act 216)
'Hawai'i Builds' Pilot Program

On July 9, Governor Green signed Senate Bill 2544 (Act 216) into law. The bill was inspired by British Columbia's Builds Program, a building model that speeds up the traditional 36-to-60 month construction period down to a 12-to-18 month process.

Effective on July 8, the 'Hawai'i Builds' Pilot Program is a 5-year initiative that fast-tracks affordable housing construction. It directs the Hawai'i Housing Finance & Development Corporation (HHFDC) to help developers produce affordable housing by sidestepping county council reviews. Through the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund (DURF), HHFDC will also provide $20 million during each of the 5 years to finance pre-development or construction activities.

More than 50% of units must serve households at 60–140% of the median income for the county, and project sites must have adequate infrastructure and should be zoned for residential use.

Senate Bill 2866 (Act 250)
Establishes Permanent Kūpuna Rent Assistance

On July 14, Governor Green signed Senate Bill 2866 now Act 250 into law. The bill removes the expiration date of Hawai'i's state rent supplement program for Kūpuna, making it permanent.

This bill also provides up to $500 per month in rental assistance to support at-risk kūpuna and prevents vulnerable elderly residents from facing eviction and homelessness. Qualified kūpuna must be 62 years of age or older and must be homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. This new law is a big step forward

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for housing stability throughout the islands.

House Bill 1721 (Act 177)
Expedited Permitting

On June 26, Governor Green signed into law House Bill 1721, now Act 177. Effective July 1, 2026, the new law will help speed up home construction.

For residential permit applications that have been stalled with the county for more than 60 business days, applicants can now fast-track the process by utilizing a certified private architect or engineer to approve construction plans. Speeding up the paperwork does not mean cutting corners. County or State inspectors are still legally required to perform physical, on-site safety inspections. The new law also decreases professional liability insurance requirements to $1 million and fixes liability rules, making it much safer for local architects and engineers to help clear the backlog. While licensed professionals can speed up the review, your local county permitting agency still oversees the process. Upon completion of construction, the county shall issue a Certificate of Occupancy (with a note that construction used the expedited track).

For more information about these bills and other legislation, please contact the Office of State Senator Stanley Chang at **(808) 586-8420**.

EXPANDED FREE MEALS FOR ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

For the 2026–2027 school year, free meals at public schools have been expanded to more students!

The Department of Education has expanded its free meal eligibility to families with household incomes at or below 300% of the federal poverty level. The expansion builds on last school year's changes which eliminated meal charges for students who qualified for reduced-price meals. Eligible students will receive one free breakfast and one free lunch each school day. If a student would like to purchase a second meal or à la carte items such as milk, funds will need to be deposited into their account.

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The program is administered locally by the Department's School Food Services Branch.

To submit an application for free meal benefits, please visit the **EZMealApp**. For more information about income eligibility requirements, please visit the **Free and Reduced Priced Meals Program**.



Image Credit: Hawai'i Department of Education

SCHOOL IS HERE, AVOID THE TRAFFIC!

The start of the new school year means more congestion on Hawai'i roads. Luckily, Hawai'i offers programs to combat traffic.

Here are some programs:

- Eligible students can qualify for **reduced fare** and **free bus passes**.
- **HiRideShare** is a state carpooling platform that matches passengers with drivers.
- Like having your own wheels? The e-bike and electric moped **rebate program** provides rebates of up to $500 or 20% of the retail price available for eligible purchases of newly purchased electric bicycles and electric mopeds. As always, ride safely with your helmet on!

For those who choose to drive, slow down and maintain situational awareness in school zones. Give way to pedestrians, school buses, and other drivers. For more information, please contact our office at **(808) 586-8420**.



Image Credit: Hawai'i Department of Education

PGA SONY CHAMPIONSHIP HAWAII STARTS JANUARY 2027

After 61 years, the PGA Tour's Sony Open in Hawai'i will be renamed 'Sony Championship Hawai'i' starting in January 2027. The event will take place at the Wai'alae Country Club.

This change will primarily affect competition size, number of rounds, and age group. It will feature 78 professional golfers of age 50 and over, including 35 members of the World Golf Hall of Fame. Participants will play a shorter three round format. This differs from the original format that featured the top 144 players from around the world playing over four rounds. This change reaffirms PGA and Sony's commitment to professional golf in Hawai'i.

The changes are expected to improve business and viewership in Hawai'i. The Sony Championship Hawai'i will be held during the week of January 11. For more information, please visit **PGA TOUR**.



Image Credit: *Golf Digest*

SHARE YOUR OPINION WITH US!

Share your thoughts! Constituents of Senate District 9 are now receiving our annual mailer. This is an opportunity for you to share your feedback on our neighborhood and State. You can voice your concerns and opinions by mailing back the postcard or completing our Constituent Survey online.

In 2026, I was proud to work with my Senate colleagues on protecting tax cuts for the working and middle-class families of our district. Families will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money for everyday essentials like housing, food, childcare and utilities.

In addition to our efforts, investments in public infrastructure have increased in our district. For example, $500,000 in general obligation bonds was allocated for the renovation of Diamond Head Theater, and $1 million was granted to Diamond Head State Monument for infrastructure repairs. Additional investments include $7 million for improvements at the Waikīkī Aquarium, $1 million for repairs at 'Āina Haina Elementary School, and $500,000 for Wailupe Stream flood mitigation.

To voice your opinion about our past year's efforts or issues that need our attention, please complete the **Constituent Survey**, call us at **(808) 586-8420**, or mail back the postcard with your thoughts!



Image Credit: Office of Senator Stanley Chang

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