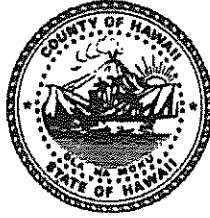


William P. Kenoi
Mayor



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January 26, 2015

The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair,
and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
415 South Beretania Street
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Finance
415 South Beretania Street
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha, Chair Tokuda, Chair Luke and distinguished members of the Senate Ways and Means and House Finance Committees. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the County of Hawaii's priorities for the 2015 legislative session.

On behalf of the people and families of Hawaii Island, I would like to thank all of you for your hard work and support last year. We sincerely appreciate your efforts to improve the lives of our residents and visitors.

We respectfully request the legislature to focus on fulfilling the commitments already made to state projects and programs on Hawaii Island. State work on Hawaii Island will help create jobs, provide relief from traffic congestion, protect public safety, and invest in critical infrastructure. We stand ready to assist our legislators and the state of Hawai'i with these projects and initiatives in any way possible, and look forward to working with you.

ASSISTANCE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF PUNA

The people of lower Puna are dealing with the threat created by the Puna lava flow. The flow is threatening vital transportation routes, power lines, commercial centers, and other infrastructure that serves the more than 10,000 residents residing in one of the fastest growing sections of the state. We respectfully request the legislature work with insurance providers to adopt legislation ensuring that the residents of lower Puna can keep their homeowners and property insurance policies.

TRANSPORTATION

Improvements to Highway 130, Kea'au-Paho Highway

We respectfully ask for your support to complete the work underway on the Kea'au-Paho Highway. This highly congested state highway is the only major route in and out of Lower Puna, and serves one of the fastest growing regions in our state. The state has been expanding Highway 130 to help alleviate the morning and evening rush hour traffic and we are very thankful for the road crews' hard work and would like to ask the legislature to continue to fund their efforts.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Civil Defense Sirens

Tropical Storm Iselle, the threat of Hurricane Ana, and tsunami underscored the need to improve our early warning system on Hawaii Island. We continue to support the modernization of the state civil defense siren system, which is critical to maintaining and improving public safety. This initiative will convert the existing radio-activated siren system to a more reliable satellite- and cellular-based system. That would include 36 new sirens for Hawai'i Island, and we urge your committees to continue this work.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Kona International Airport Improvements

We continue to strongly support the administration's plans for urgently needed improvements for Kona International Airport, and recently wrote the U.S. Department of Transportation in support of Hawaiian Airlines Inc.'s application to provide service between Kona International Airport and Haneda Airport in Tokyo. We continue to work collaboratively with state Department of Transportation and community organizations to encourage the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to reopen the international arrivals inspection facilities in Kona. State investment in Kona airport infrastructure is essential to the success of those efforts, and we respectfully request the legislature's support in this matter. The resumption of international flights to Hawaii Island will help create jobs and economic opportunities and investment in Kona airport infrastructure will help alleviate congestion at the Honolulu International Airport and will allow our state to continue to grow as an international visitor destination during the busiest travel seasons.

The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
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Each of these initiatives and projects represents a critical investment in the welfare of our communities and will help improve the lives of our residents and visitors. We thank you for your consideration, and look forward to working with all of our distinguished legislators this session.

Mahalo for your support and your commitment to the people of Hawaii Island.

Aloha,

William P. Kenoi
MAYOR