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STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 357,
RELATING TO HURRICANE SHELTERS

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

JANUARY 29, 2025

Aloha Chair Bellati, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a testimony to **SUPPORT** House Bill 357.

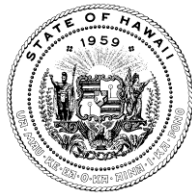
The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency is committed to any initiative that enhances the state's sheltering capabilities. Investments aimed at developing and strengthening our existing infrastructure are vital for ensuring the safety and preparedness of our entire state.

To provide context, federal and state Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funds currently total approximately \$21,974,630, with ten percent allocated to retrofitting three schools: Laupahoehoe, Moloka'i, and Waialua. These projects will not only enhance our sheltering resources but also play a critical role in building resilience against future storms.

With the allocated funds, HIEMA will collaborate closely with the counties to implement robust retrofitting programs. HIEMA supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 357.

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Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committee on Public Safety
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and via Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 357, RELATING TO HURRICANE SHELTERS

Chair Au Belatti and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gordon Ito, and I am the Insurance Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Insurance Division. The Department supports the intent of this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for the Office of the Governor, in collaboration with the Insurance Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, to strengthen existing hurricane shelters and develop new hurricane shelters to withstand category five hurricanes.

The Department supports the intent to appropriate funds so existing hurricane shelters may protect Hawaii's residents during an emergency and continue to serve as a safe space in the aftermath.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
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Date: 01/29/2025

Time: 09:00 AM

Location: 411 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Public Safety

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0357 RELATING TO HURRICANE SHELTERS.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds for the Office of the Governor, in collaboration with the Insurance Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, to strengthen existing hurricane shelters and develop new hurricane shelters to withstand category five hurricanes.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 357.

The Department agrees that a program for strengthening of existing shelters and development of new hurricane shelters would be appropriate to be handled through the Office of the Governor, in collaboration with the Insurance Division of the State of Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. However, the proposed bill includes broad language "to strengthen existing shelters and develop new shelters to withstand category five hurricanes" that needs to be better defined.

The Department would like to caution that the cost to increase the level of sheltering provided at existing school facilities, to withstand category five hurricane force winds, would be significant and would not be compatible with the day to day functions of the facilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on HB 357.



Hawai'i Climate Advisory Team

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Public Safety

From: The Climate Advisory Team

RE: **HB357 - Relating to Hurricane Shelters - In Support**
Wednesday, January 29, 9:00 a.m.; Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Au Belatti, Vice Chair Coco Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB357 relating to hurricane shelters. We **support the intent** of this measure because as the frequency and severity of hurricanes increase, adequate shelters must be available to and prepared for residents in the event of a disaster. The CAT has recognized that 64 percent of O'ahu's single-family homes lack hurricane protection, and the proposed bill would ensure residents in need of shelter have a safe place to go.

We, the undersigned members of the Governor's Climate Advisory Team (CAT), support the intent of this bill. It aligns with the CAT's near-term recommendations to promote community resilience through pre-disaster coordination and fortifying Hawai'i's structures against wind damage, which we believe is critical to ensuring the health and safety of Hawai'i residents. For further information about the CAT's recommendations for community resilience, please refer to [Section 3.4 of our Policy Recommendations on Climate Disaster Resilience, Recovery and Funding](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee **in support of the intent** of HB357.

With aloha,

The Climate Advisory Team

HB-357

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:24:49 PM

Testimony for PBS on 1/29/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Kioni Dudley	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

HB357

Did you know that we don't have a single hurricane shelter on O'ahu?

C'mon the Honolulu Department of Emergency Management has a map with 38 hurricane shelters on it.

Not true. Their website shows 38 hurricane refuge areas, not hurricane shelters.

They are not allowed to call the 38 places "shelters" because not a single one of them has the qualifications to be called a shelter.

And they tell you on the site that these are last resort places to go. Stay away if you possibly can.

They also tell you that they expect **200,000** people to need a shelter in a Category 1 or 2 hurricane, but they only have places of refuge for 100,000 people. That means 100,000 people will have no place to go even in a Cat 1 or 2 hurricane. Will you be one of those 100,000 people? What about your spouse and kids? Where will they go? Will your family die?

Now I've only mentioned shelters for a Cat 1 or 2 hurricanes. When a Category 3, 4, or 5 hits, we don't have a single shelter that will hold up. There's **no place for anyone** to go. What will you do? Will you be able to save your family?

This bill will fund the strengthening of current places of refuge and give money to build more. We obviously need it, and need it now.

I do have some good news. In the past, the emergency management people were concentrating only on gyms and cafeterias. Now they are looking at classrooms in multi-story buildings. Because they are multi-story, they are made of brick or cement. So only windows and doors have to be replaced. We now have glass companies that make windows and doors that can easily withstand 200 mph winds and flying debris. And they are only about 40% more expensive than regular windows and doors.

Hurricanes are getting stronger and stronger with warming seas. Many of you and your families are going to need a place to go when one hits. Save your own lives. Save the lives of your spouse and kids. Vote for this money to strengthen hurricane shelters and to build new ones.