



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0784
RELATING TO HEALTH**

SENATOR SAN BUENAVENTURA JOY, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: March 12, 2025

Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request. The appropriation of
4 \$1,750,000 for fiscal year 2025-2026 and for fiscal year 2026-2027.

5 **Department Position:** The Department is in strong support of this measure and respectfully
6 offers the following comments.

7 **Department Testimony:** The Emergency Medical Services & Injury Prevention System Branch
8 (EMSIPSB) is submits this testimony on behalf of the Department of Health. Based on a detailed
9 review of emergency response data, we support adding an ambulance in West Hawaii to improve
10 access to emergency care.

11 Between March 1, 2022, and December 31, 2024, there were 74,619 emergency incidents in
12 Hawaii County. The Makalei area, consisting of the South West section of County District 8,
13 accounted for 5,127 of these calls, about 7% of the total volume (See Figure 1 on page 3 of this
14 document). Currently, emergency medical services (EMS) in Makalei rely on ambulances
15 from Fire Stations 7 (Kailua-Kona), 12 (Keauhou), 14 (Kamuela), and 16 (Waikoloa). Fire
16 Station 21 in Makalei does not have its own ambulance. Because of this, Fire Station 7, one of
17 the busiest stations in the county, handles nearly 50% of all Makalei’s emergency calls. This puts
18 significant strain on emergency response in both Kailua-Kona and Makalei. Adding an

1 ambulance in the Kailua-Kona area or directly at Fire Station 21 in Makalei would help provide
2 better coverage for both communities and address Kona’s growing demand..

3 Looking at the downtime between calls for EMS units across the county, Fire Station 7 has one
4 of the shortest times between calls—just 129 minutes. This makes it the second busiest EMS unit
5 in the county. In contrast, other stations, such as Fire Station 14, have more time between calls
6 (267 minutes), while Fire Station 16 has the longest downtime (305 minutes). This data confirms
7 that Fire Station 7 is under heavy demand and needs additional support.

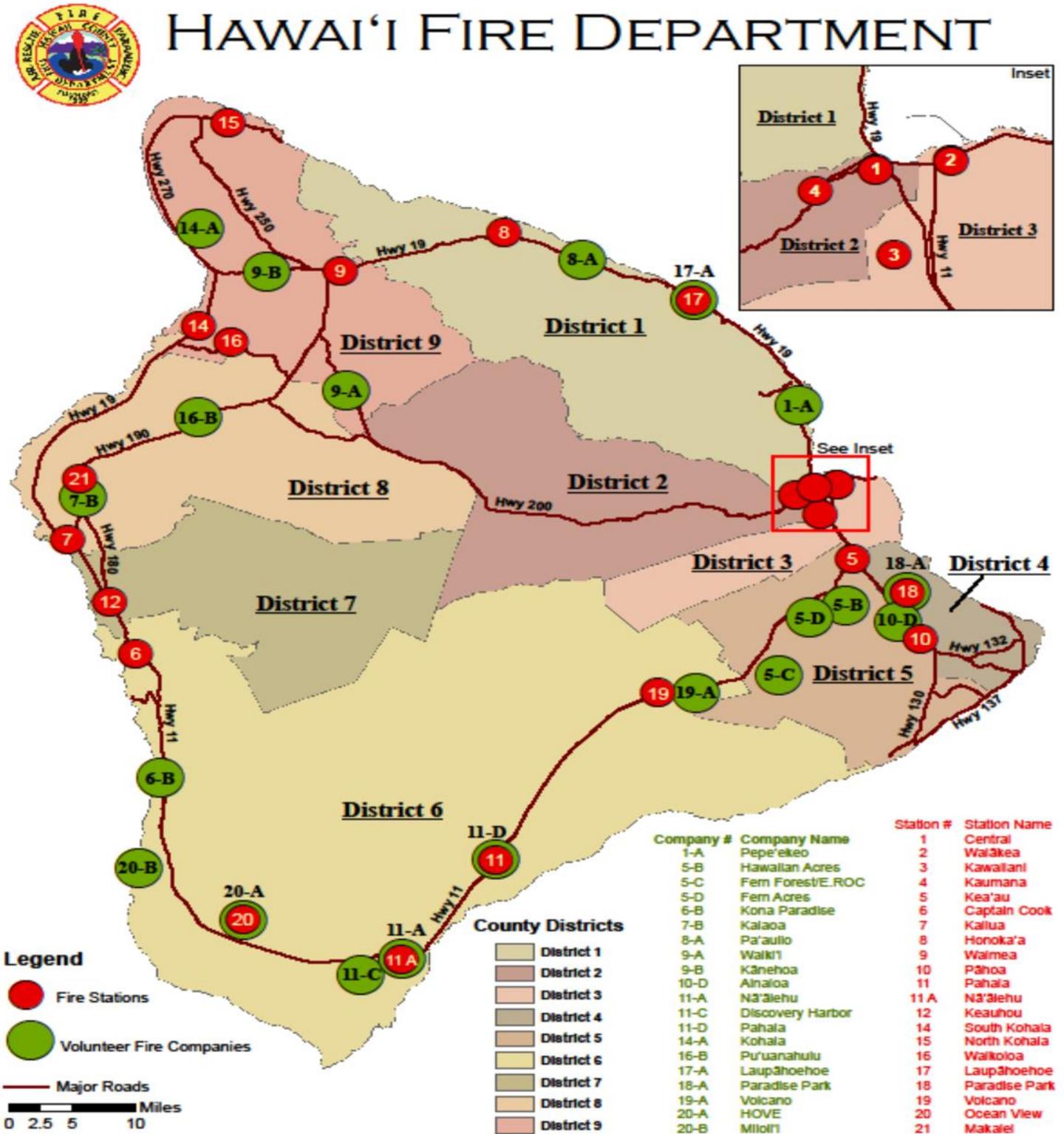
8 Placing an ambulance at Fire Station 21 in Makalei would help reduce the burden on Fire Station
9 7, improve response times, and improve access to lifesaving care for residents and visitors in
10 County Districts 7, 8, and 9. It is important to recognize the growing demand for emergency
11 resources in Kailua-Kona, as these demands may require Fire Station 21, Makalei, to provide
12 backup coverage.

13 We recommend these findings be considered when determining the optimal location for a new
14 ambulance unit to ensure the delivery of effective, efficient, and equitable emergency medical
15 services.

16 **Offered Amendments:** None

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure .

Figure 1: Map of Hawaii County Districts and Fire Stations





**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, M.D.
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea St., #402, Honolulu, HI 96813 Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

March 11, 2025

LATE

To: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and
Honorable Members

From: John C (Jack) Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA;
and Senior Advisor to Governor Green On Healthcare Innovation

Re: **HB784, HD1 - Relating to Health**

Hearing: March 12, 2025 @ 1:10 pm, Conference Room 225

Position: SUPPORT

Testimony:

SHPDA's Hawai'i Island Subarea Advisory Council, and EMSAC (SHPDA's Administrator is a member) strongly support this needed investment.

Please find resources to fund this additional ambulance to be based in Makalei.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 784 HD 1
RELATING TO HEALTH**

House Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 12, 2025

1:10PM

Room 225

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB 784 HD 1 which makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for the island of Hawai'i to be based in Makalei.

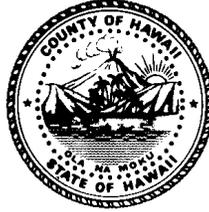
OHA is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.¹ Among its statutory duties, OHA is required to (1) serve as principal public agency in the State of Hawai'i responsible for the performance, development and coordination of programs and activities relating to native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; (2) assess the policies and practices of other agencies impacting native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; and (3) conduct advocacy efforts for native Hawaiians and Hawaiians.²

In fulfillment of its mandates, OHA seeks to advance policies, programs and practices that increase access to quality, culturally informed healthcare for Native Hawaiians. HB 784 will expand critical emergency medical services infrastructure and mitigate transportation barriers, which is crucial for Native Hawaiians who live in rural areas on the island of Hawai'i. Given the island's significant growth and aging population, an additional ambulance is necessary to help reduce death and disability among residents and visitors.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HB 784 HD 1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XII § 5

² Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 10-3.



HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

March 10, 2025

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

RE: **Support for HB784 HD1**, Relating to Health; Makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for Makalei, North Kona
Hearing: **Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.**

Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

On behalf of Council District 8 in North Kona, I am grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB784 HD1.

This legislation seeks funding for an additional advanced life support ambulance to be stationed in Makalei, North Kona, to improve emergency medical services on Hawai'i Island.

The emergency medical team based at the Kailua-Kona Fire Station is responsible for covering a vast area—from Pu'uana'hulu to Sea View Circle—placing significant strain on response times and increasing the workload for our first responders. As our community continues to grow, ensuring swift access to emergency medical care is vital to protecting public safety.

The large coverage area, rugged terrain, and growing traffic congestion further contributes to delayed emergency response times. Given the urgency of medical emergencies, adding an ambulance in Makalei would enhance response time and life-saving care.

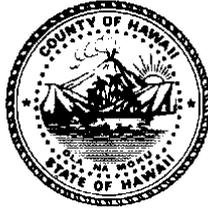
An ambulance in Makalei would distribute emergency resources more effectively, reduce the burden on the Kailua-Kona unit, and improve critical medical services. This investment is not just about faster response times—it is about saving lives.

We are in dire need of your support and passage of HB784 HD1.

Sincerely,

HOLEKA GORO INABA, Ed.D.,
Council District 8, North Kona

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



William V. Brillhante, Jr.
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • Phone (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
Phone (808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: C. Kimo Alameda, PhD., Mayor

DATE: March 10, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB784, HD1, RELATING TO HEALTH**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer my **strong support** for House Bill 784 HD1, which proposes appropriations to fund the operation of the first advanced life support ambulance in the Makalei area of North Kona, on the island of Hawai'i.

The residents of North Kona face significant challenges accessing timely medical care, with primary care services often located as far as thirty miles away. Economic and transportation barriers further compound this issue, making emergency medical services a critical lifeline for the community. While the bill states additional, this advance life support unit would be the **only ambulance** in the area.

This will address the growing healthcare needs of this region by:

- **Improving Emergency Response Times:** Prompt responses to 911 calls are essential for saving lives and reducing long-term health complications.
- **Enhancing Access to Care:** For many residents, emergency services are their only means of receiving timely medical attention due to geographic and economic constraints.
- **Supporting a Growing and Aging Population:** North Kona has experienced significant population growth, including an increase in older residents who are at greater risk of health emergencies.
- **Reducing Strain on Existing Resources:** The current emergency medical services system is overstretched and unable to meet the demands of the community effectively.

This investment will undoubtedly save lives and improve health outcomes for residents and visitors to the island of Hawaii.

Mahalo, for your consideration of this critical issue.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:35:59 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Todd	Testifying for Hawaii Fire Department	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai‘i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 784 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 784, which seeks to appropriate funding for an additional advanced life support (ALS) ambulance to be based in Makalei, North Kona. As Fire Chief of the Hawai‘i Fire Department, I can attest to the critical need for additional EMS resources to meet the growing demand for emergency medical services on Hawai‘i Island.

In West Hawai‘i alone, ambulances cover a vast 1,922-square-mile area, responding to thousands of calls annually. Despite continued growth in population, tourism, and EMS call volume, the number of ambulances serving this region has remained the same. As a result, ambulance units are frequently overburdened, response times are increasing, and ambulances must often be pulled from surrounding districts to meet demand.

Adding an ALS ambulance in Makalei would directly improve public safety and emergency medical outcomes by:

1. Reducing response times, ensuring faster pre-hospital care for residents and visitors.
2. Alleviating strain on existing ambulances, preventing dangerous coverage gaps in North Kona, and Kailua.
3. Enhancing firefighter-paramedic readiness, reducing burnout and improving overall service delivery.
4. Strengthening Hawai‘i’s disaster resilience, ensuring EMS resources are better distributed for wildfire, hurricane, and mass casualty incidents.

Without immediate action, EMS resources in North Kona and Kailua will continue to be overstretched, leading to life-threatening delays for residents and visitors in need of urgent medical care. The data overwhelmingly supports the need for this additional resource.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB 784 and invest in this critical expansion of emergency medical services for the island of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kazuo Todd
Fire Chief
Hawai'i Fire Department

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 11:40:25 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Garrett Nishihara	Testifying for Hawaii fire department, Makalei Fire station	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident and Fire Captain of this district, I support the establishment and need for a dedicated ambulance in the north Kona district. The need for timely medical response has never been more critical, especially in an area where access to emergency care can be limited or delayed. Currently the residents of this district rely on emergency medical services provided from district sevens ambulance, (Kailua), when district sevens ambulance is on a call, the next ambulance if available to respond, is either coming from the Keauhou or Waikōloa fire stations, both with response times that may exceed 20 minutes. This gap in emergency medical services puts lives at risk, particularly for those experiencing heart attacks, strokes, or severe injuries where urgent and timely response is critical.. An ambulance stationed within our district would ensure that help is just minutes away, providing peace of mind to families and potentially saving lives.

By investing in this essential service, we are prioritizing the health and well-being of our residents and ensuring that our district is equipped to handle emergencies effectively. I urge our local leaders to consider the profound impact that a dedicated ambulance service would have on our community.

Sincerely

Garrett Nishihara

Fire Captain

Hawaii Fire Department

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 3:57:58 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jake Styner	Testifying for HFD	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jake Styner and I am writing this testimony in supporting of HB784. I am a firefighter, paramedic, and most importantly someone who personally lives in this community alongside numerous other family members and friends. As many others have stated, this ambulance has been long overdue. I have been stationed in Kailua for 3 years and served this community/district in various positions (paramedic, EMT, T/A FRS). During my time here I have come to find that a large chunk of our emergency responses are in district 21. Every other “district” on the island has a designated ambulance, however, district 21 does not and is instead taken care of by neighboring medical units (M07, M12, M06, and sometimes even M16 & M14). The palisades/kalaoa subdivisions are one of the most densely populated areas in Kona. Station 7 is already the busiest on the whole island statistically backed, yet we are the first in response for this community. Im sure you have all the numbers and stats available to look at but the simple fact is that there needs to be an ambulance at Makalei. There has been an exponential growth in call volume even just in the time that I have been stationed here, to the point where I feel like it is approaching gross negligence on part of the legislature for the County of Hawai‘i by not have one for district 21. There’s a saying , “stuff changes when stuff happens”, I just feel it would be a shame for someones tragedy to have to be the catalyst to finally get the ALS ambulance support for an community that obviously needs it, and has obviously needed it for several years. I humbly ask for your understanding on the seriousness of this matter and please do the right thing. Get this ambulance funded and get the taxpayers of district 21 and County of Hawai the emergency services that they deserve!



Helping Those Who Help All Of Us

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Committee Members

RE: **Support for HB784 HD1**, Relating to Health; Makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for Makalei, North Kona

On behalf of the Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation, a 501 (C) 3 public Foundation, whose primary mission is to save lives in Hawaii, I am grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support** of HB784 HD1.

This legislation seeks funding for an advanced life support ambulance to be stationed in Makalei, North Kona, to improve emergency medical outcomes. This ambulance is desperately needed to provide adequate emergency services to the citizens that dwell in North Kona and to alleviate the stress on the Kailua-Kona HFD EMS Station at Rescue 7, which currently serves a vast district ranging from Pu'uana'hulu to Sea View Circle. This Foundation has been working for the **past 20 years** to secure an ambulance for this station, to no avail. The need for this service is becoming more critical and can no longer be put on a back shelf. The DOH has stated that the amount of calls for service in this area does not warrant a ambulance and I beg to differ with them. Many of us rush down to Emergency Care Clinics because we know that there is no ambulance available in our community and we take the ambulance from there to the hospital. That being said, I feel that the data that they are quoting is skewed and does not truly represent the actual need. When my shoulder was severely dislocated, I had to wait for an ambulance to come from Captain Cook to take me to the hospital. I live in Kaloko!!! My husband was picked up at the Emergency Care Clinic near Costco when he went into atrial fibrillation because we knew that no ambulance was available in our district to take him to Kona Community Hospital.

Per HFD Station 7 Captain Chad Sohriakoff's testimony:

" The District of Kona has experienced a significant increase in emergency calls due to population growth. The Kailua-Kona Station is the busiest Fire Station on the Island of Hawai'i. In 2024 alone, the Kailua-Kona Fire Station received over 4,550 emergency calls."

Currently, their emergency response system is under strain due to:

-Longer response times because of limited ambulances, putting lives at risk; overburdened EMS personnel leading to burnout and staffing challenges; delays in critical care where every second counts and can mean the difference between life and death.

The residents of North Kona deserve to have this critical access to care and we beseech you to please pass this Bill and help us to acquire this much needed ambulance.

Laura Mallory Sayre, Executive Director

808.325.5456
Fax: 808.325.7516

info@DanielSayreFoundation.net
<http://DanielSayreFoundation.net>
We are a 501 (C) 3 non-profit organization

PO Box 1285
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96745



HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS
C O R P O R A T I O N

"Quality Healthcare For All"

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

March 12, 2025

1:10 PM

Hawaii State Capitol

Room 225 & Via Videoconference

H.B. 784, H.D. 1

RELATING TO HEALTH

Makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for the island of Hawai'i to be based in Makalei.

Edward N. Chu

President & Chief Executive Officer

Hawaii Health Systems Corporation

On behalf of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) Corporate Board of Directors, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **in support of H.B. 784, HD1, Relating to Health.**

Ambulances play a crucial and time-sensitive role in transporting critically ill patients to area hospitals. For many emergency situations, such as if a patient is having a stroke, every second counts toward saving lives. Providing more resources for such services are something that our residents throughout Hawai'i Island deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

1321 Kino'ole Street - Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Phone (808) 935-7178 - Fax (808) 961-4435 - Email exec@hicc.biz - www.hicc.biz

Executive Officer

Carla Kuo

2024-2025

Board of Directors

President

Keith Marrack

President-Elect

David Kurohara

Vice President

Dennis Lin

Treasurer

Joshua Vierra

Immediate Past President

Randall Kurohara

Directors

Kehau Amorin

Mary Begier

Vanessa Carlson

Rebecca Choi

Jeremy Chong

Chelsey Chow

Mark Chun

Kapaelani Comstock

Dean Fuke

Larisa Hamamoto

Bonnie Irwin

Daniel Kea

Tyson Klask

Geoli Ng

Lisa Shiroma

James Staub

Jase Takeya

Nimr Tamimi

Irene Yamanaka

Tracie Yoshimoto

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

HB 784 HD1 - Relating to Health – IN SUPPORT

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:10 PM

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, representing over 300 businesses and individual members, I am pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 784 HD1, which appropriates funding for the operation of an additional ambulance for Hawai'i Island, to be based in Makalei.

Access to primary health care in North Kona remains a significant challenge for the community. Many residents must travel long distances to receive primary care services, a distance that poses serious obstacles, particularly for those facing economic and transportation hardships. As a result, emergency medical services (EMS) have increasingly become the primary access point for health care in the region. Expanding EMS resources with an additional ambulance in Makalei will improve response times and ensure timely medical attention for residents in need.

By investing in this critical health infrastructure, the state can help bridge the gap in health care access for North Kona residents, ultimately enhancing community well-being and saving lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 784 HD1. I respectfully urge the committee to pass this important measure.

Sincerely,

Carla Kuo

Executive Officer

Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce



Three Ring Ranch Exotic Animal Sanctuary

75-809 Keaolani Dr., Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740 phone 808 331-8778
animals@threeringranch.org www.threeringranch.org

Aloha,

Please accept my testimony in support of **HB784**. North Kona has a widely diverse population blended of families, retirees, elderly, and tourists. The wail of sirens can be heard from early morning throughout the day. I am the Executive Director of the Three Ring Ranch and have regularly seen our communities' residents waiting for medical assistance. As an ER physician my husband well knows the damage caused by the delay in medical care for those in need. An additional ambulance and paramedic team will be invaluable in saving lives and minimizing trauma.

Minutes count.

Please pass this urgently needed bill.

Sincerely,

Ann Goody RN., PhD



March 10, 2025

Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services
Senate
Hawaii State Legislature

Support for HB784 HD1

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our support for HB784 HD1.

We would appreciate your support for this valuable investment in emergency response, to serve the communities of North Kona at the Makalei Fire Station.

On behalf of our 5,500 employees and the 17,500 Hawaii Island residents they support, mahalo for the opportunity to provide our support on HB784 HD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie P. Donoho". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephanie Donoho, Administrative Director

Craig Anderson, VP Operations, Mauna Kea Resort –President
Pat Fitzgerald, CEO, Hualalai Investors – Vice President
Charlie Parker, General Manager, Four Seasons Hualalai – Secretary
Daniel Scott, Managing Director Rosewood Kona Village – Treasurer
Chris Sessions, DOSM, Fairmont Orchid – Board of Directors
Scott Head, VP Resort Operations, Waikoloa Land Company – Board of Directors
David Givens, General Manager, Hilton Waikoloa Village – Board of Directors
Rob Gunthner, Area VP Resort Operations, Hilton Grand Vacations – Board of Directors
Pete Alles, Regional VP and GM, Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection – Board of Directors
Mark Goldrup, General Manager, Waikoloa Beach Marriott – Board of Directors

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 1:01:54 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Bailey	Testifying for American Medical Response	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:34:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Frank H. Sayre, D.D.S.	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha, My name is Dr. Frank Sayre, DDS. I am a 50 year resident of North Kona. During that time I have seen the population of the Big Island increase from 98,000 to over 200,000. Much of that growth has occurred in North Kona. There have been no additional ambulances added to our catchment area. Station 7 in Kailua-Kona, which covers this area, has the highest call volume on the Island. Much of the anticipated growth on the West Side of the Island will be towards the North. We desperately need an ambulance and crew at Station 21 at Makalei. Given the time to reach Kona Community Hospital from this area patient's lives are being put at increasing risk. Please help to save the lives of residents and visitors. Mahalo nui

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 5:00:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David de Carvalho	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, I will submit testimony in support via zoom.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:55:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Inaba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

As a resident of Kona on Hawai'i Island, I am submitting my strong support for **HB784 HD1**, which seeks funding for an **additional advanced life support ambulance** to be stationed in **Makalei, North Kona**. This investment is critical to improving emergency medical response times and ensuring the safety of our growing community.

Currently, the emergency medical team stationed at the **Kailua-Kona Fire Station** is tasked with covering an expansive area, stretching from **Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle**. This vast coverage area, combined with increasing traffic congestion and rugged terrain, significantly impacts response times—jeopardizing the health and safety of our community members during life-threatening emergencies.

As our population grows, the demand for **timely emergency medical services** also increases. Without additional resources, we risk continued delays in life-saving care. Stationing an **ambulance in Makalei** would **distribute emergency resources more effectively**, alleviate the burden on the Kailua-Kona team, and most importantly, **save lives**.

This is not just about faster response times—it's about ensuring that when a loved one collapses, when a keiki is injured, or when a kupuna experiences a medical emergency, **help can arrive without unnecessary delay**. Every minute counts in an emergency, and the addition of an ambulance in Makalei could mean the difference between life and death.

I urge you to support and pass **HB784 HD1** to protect the health and safety of our community. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Mahalo nui,

Rebecca Kawehi Inaba

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:51:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen D Lopez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for hearing this critical to West Hawaii Bill.

As a >26 year resident and having lived in Makalei prior to the fire station construction. I now live closer to Kailua town and can fully appreciate the strain on our current EMS operating out of the fire station in Kailua Kona. They may drive long distance within very narrow traffic filled roads where much time is lost in trying to save a life. The Makalei location is north of town and thus able to much more quickly respond north and south. This time can make the difference between life and death in many circumstances. As a citizen who sees the vast hole in medical services in West Hawaii I humbly urge you to provide some sense of assistance in an EMT response team at the Makalei location.

Mahalo for your consideration

Stephen D Lopez, Kailua Kona

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:06:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Stone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo Committee Members for receiving my testimony in **strong support for HB784** and an ambulance for North Kona.

Aloha,
Monica Stone 96740

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:56:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Troy Gibson Sr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of the Makalei fire district on the big island to receive an abulance. Currently this area is underserved and getting a ambulance there would greatly increase the service delivery to the district. Thank you for your consideration.

aloha,

troy

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:24:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

As a resident of Kona on Hawai'i Island, I am submitting my strong support for **HB784 HD1**, which seeks funding for an **additional advanced life support ambulance** to be stationed in **Makalei, North Kona**. This investment is critical to improving emergency medical response times and ensuring the safety of our growing community.

Currently, the emergency medical team stationed at the **Kailua-Kona Fire Station** is tasked with covering an expansive area, stretching from **Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle**. This vast coverage area, combined with increasing traffic congestion and rugged terrain, significantly impacts response times—jeopardizing the health and safety of our community members during life-threatening emergencies.

As our population grows, the demand for **timely emergency medical services** also increases. Without additional resources, we risk continued delays in life-saving care. Stationing an **ambulance in Makalei** would **distribute emergency resources more effectively**, alleviate the burden on the Kailua-Kona team, and most importantly, **save lives**.

This is not just about faster response times—it's about ensuring that when a loved one collapses, when a keiki is injured, or when a kupuna experiences a medical emergency, **help can arrive without unnecessary delay**. Every minute counts in an emergency, and the addition of an ambulance in Makalei could mean the difference between life and death.

I urge you to support and pass **HB784 HD1** to protect the health and safety of our community. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Herb and Jennifer Ching
Holualoa, Hawai'i Island Resident

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:24:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

As a resident of Kona on Hawai'i Island, I am submitting my strong support for **HB784 HD1**, which seeks funding for an **additional advanced life support ambulance** to be stationed in **Makalei, North Kona**. This investment is critical to improving emergency medical response times and ensuring the safety of our growing community.

Currently, the emergency medical team stationed at the **Kailua-Kona Fire Station** is tasked with covering an expansive area, stretching from **Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle**. This vast coverage area, combined with increasing traffic congestion and rugged terrain, significantly impacts response times—jeopardizing the health and safety of our community members during life-threatening emergencies.

As our population grows, the demand for **timely emergency medical services** also increases. Without additional resources, we risk continued delays in life-saving care. Stationing an **ambulance in Makalei** would **distribute emergency resources more effectively**, alleviate the burden on the Kailua-Kona team, and most importantly, **save lives**.

This is not just about faster response times—it's about ensuring that when a loved one collapses, when a keiki is injured, or when a kupuna experiences a medical emergency, **help can arrive without unnecessary delay**. Every minute counts in an emergency, and the addition of an ambulance in Makalei could mean the difference between life and death.

I urge you to support and pass **HB784 HD1** to protect the health and safety of our community. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Bob Douglas
Hawai'i Island Resident

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:52:49 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

As a resident of Kona on Hawai'i Island, I am submitting my strong support for **HB784 HD1**, which seeks funding for an **additional advanced life support ambulance** to be stationed in **Makalei, North Kona**. This investment is critical to improving emergency medical response times and ensuring the safety of our growing community.

Currently, the emergency medical team stationed at the **Kailua-Kona Fire Station** is tasked with covering an expansive area, stretching from **Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle**. This vast coverage area, combined with increasing traffic congestion and rugged terrain, significantly impacts response times—jeopardizing the health and safety of our community members during life-threatening emergencies.

As our population grows, while the working class is pushed more South and North of Kailua-Kona to Hilo, the traffic is insanely backed up, and the demand for **timely emergency medical services** also increases. We even have an ambulance coming from Kamuela to Kona!

Without additional resources, we risk continued delays in life-saving care. Stationing an **ambulance in Makalei** would **distribute emergency resources more effectively**, alleviate the burden on the Kailua-Kona team, and, most importantly, **save lives**.

This is not just about faster response times—it's about ensuring that when a loved one collapses, when a keiki is injured, or when a kupuna experiences a medical emergency, **help can arrive without unnecessary delay**. Every minute counts in an emergency, and the addition of an ambulance in Makalei could mean the difference between life and death.

I urge you to support and pass **HB784 HD1** to protect the health and safety of our community.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Maki Morinoue
Kona, Hawai'i Island Resident

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:15:40 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in support of HB784.HD1. The island of Hawaii is huge and it takes a long time for first responders to arrive at certain parts of the island. Please support.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:28:03 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Henry J.C. Aquino, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services.

I strongly support HB784 HD1. Currently, the Kailua-Kona Fire Station covers the areas from Pu‘uanahulu to Sea View Circle, a massive area that is taxing to our medical responders. With the increase in population within those areas comes traffic and a delay in critical response time.

An ambulance in Makalei would distribute emergency resources more effectively and save lives.

I ask for your humble support in passing HB784 HD1.

Mahalo

Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy

Kalaoa, North Kona, Hawai‘i Island

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 7:57:04 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
noriko donna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

As a resident of Kona on Hawai'i Island, I am submitting my strong support for **HB784 HD1**, which seeks funding for an **additional advanced life support ambulance** to be stationed in **Makalei, North Kona**. This investment is critical to improving emergency medical response times and ensuring the safety of our growing community.

Currently, the emergency medical team stationed at the **Kailua-Kona Fire Station** is tasked with covering an expansive area, stretching from **Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle**. This vast coverage area, combined with increasing traffic congestion and rugged terrain, significantly impacts response times—jeopardizing the health and safety of our community members during life-threatening emergencies.

As our population grows, the demand for **timely emergency medical services** also increases. Without additional resources, we risk continued delays in life-saving care. Stationing an **ambulance in Makalei** would **distribute emergency resources more effectively**, alleviate the burden on the Kailua-Kona team, and most importantly, **save lives**.

This is not just about faster response times—it's about ensuring that when a loved one collapses, when a keiki is injured, or when a kupuna experiences a medical emergency, **help can arrive without unnecessary delay**. Every minute counts in an emergency, and the addition of an ambulance in Makalei could mean the difference between life and death.

I urge you to support and pass **HB784 HD1** to protect the health and safety of our community. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Norio Donna
Kona, Hawai'i Island Resident"

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 7:56:04 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Hecht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and thank you for your service!

Please pass this measure to support a life support ambulance at Makalei Fire Station. I am a full time Hawaii resident and own my home just makai of Kaloko. I fully support and applaud this bill. It is scary living in North Kona, because of my health issues and being in between north Hawaii Community Hospital and Kona Community Hospital. It takes 45 minutes to get to either place. Many of my friends 60 years and older have moved to Oahu or the mainland and I have frequently thought that those were my only optionsI That would break my heart to leave my home and great neighbors.

I have had 2 strokes (from which I have fully recovered because I was on the mainland and close to medical care), 3 ablations, 4 stents and a pacemaker and watchman. Having a life support ambulance within a few miles of my house, may well be a life and death matter for me!

I very much support and applaud this legislation. Mahalo nui loa!

With warm aloha,

Debbie Hecht, North Kona Hawaii.

PS- NOW to get the new hospital built near the Kona airport.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 5:08:23 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mina H Elison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

As a resident of Kona on Hawai'i Island, I am submitting my strong support for **HB784 HD1**, which seeks funding for an **additional advanced life support ambulance** to be stationed in **Makalei, North Kona**. This investment is critical to improving emergency medical response times and ensuring the safety of our growing community.

Currently, the emergency medical team stationed at the **Kailua-Kona Fire Station** is tasked with covering an expansive area, stretching from **Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle**. This vast coverage area, combined with increasing traffic congestion and rugged terrain, significantly impacts response times—jeopardizing the health and safety of our community members during life-threatening emergencies.

As our population grows, the demand for **timely emergency medical services** also increases. Without additional resources, we risk continued delays in life-saving care. Stationing an **ambulance in Makalei** would **distribute emergency resources more effectively**, alleviate the burden on the Kailua-Kona team, and most importantly, **save lives**.

This is not just about faster response times—it's about ensuring that when a loved one collapses, when a keiki is injured, or when a kupuna experiences a medical emergency, **help can arrive without unnecessary delay**. Every minute counts in an emergency, and the addition of an ambulance in Makalei could mean the difference between life and death.

I urge you to support and pass **HB784 HD1** to protect the health and safety of our community. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Mina Elison
Kama'āina of Kona Hema, Hawai'i

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 6:21:40 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! REALLY NEEDED FOR THE BIG ISLAND. AND KEEP IN MIND THIS HELICOPTER COULD ALSO SERVICE MAUI, TOO!!! MAHALO!

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 5:28:39 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matt Loper	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting my testimony in support of Bill HB784 HD1. The Fire/EMS district of Makalei is in need of an ALS ambulance. Population has grown and the number of EMS 911 calls have past a point where a dedicated ALS ambulance is needed for our district.

Mahalo for your time,

Matt Loper

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 5:10:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Igawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill 784HB for an additional Ambulance being based at Makalei fire stn. Mahalo and Aloha for your time and support.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 12:18:54 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Genesis Marks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, as a lifelong member of the Kalaoa community, I believe our district is in need of quicker ALS medical response, especially due to the fact that the nearest hospital can be 45 minutes to an hour away. With most of my family residing in what is Fire District 21 (Makalei), it would be highly preferred to have an in-district ALS ambulance that can provide life-saving support and rapid transport for what could be a life or death drive. The population of Kalaoa and Makalei areas is growing fast, and it is noticed by the multiple Emergency calls in this district daily.

As a Kailua (station 7) firefighter/EMT who understands the realities of medical emergencies in relation to hospital transport times, the decision to incorporate an ALS medic in District 21 would save lives. On top of that, it would balance the workload of Medic 7, which is the most used medical response vehicle on the Island, with some of its busiest days seeing almost 300 miles of medical response. A lot of the medical calls that Medic 7 responds to are in District 21, and when that is the case, there is no in-district Medic to cover the entire district of Kailua, which is one of the most densely populated. For these reasons, this new ambulance would not only benefit the district of Makalei, but the surrounding districts as well.

Mahalo for the time and consideration,

Genesis Marks

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:26:24 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Dillon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair, Vice Chair and members of the HHS Committee.

I strongly urge you to vote yes on this bill. An air ambulance is greatly needed on the big island due to the scarcity of medical facilities here. Please vote to support this bill. My only reservation is that it should not have to wait until the year 3000 to be implemented. It should go into effect immediately or as soon as an air ambulance is available to purchase. It will be money well spent.

Thank you for your consideration,

Joy Dillon, Hilo Resident

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:15:11 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lance Owens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident in the area, and seeing how often ambulances are needed and with the way traffic can back up when accidents happen there is only one way in/out. This is long overdue for the area. Especially with the rapid growth in the area over the past several years.

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:50:52 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB784 HD1 and providing an ALS unit in North Kona District. By putting an ambulance at Makalei Fire Station in the North Kona, the community will be provided with a fast response team and adequate care that are needed during a critical/life-threatening call.

LATE

Date: 11 March 2025

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Re: **Support for HB784, Relating to Health**

North Kona communities are at a geographic disadvantage due their proximity to hospital and clinical care. Many rely on emergency medical services for support. I worked as a dispatcher for the Hawai'i Fire Department from 2018- 2022. There were days where there were simply no ambulance units available to send to calls in Makalei's district. This was attributed to the volume of calls Kona receives and the physical, geographic span of the districts. Patients would potentially wait for the next unit to clear from Kona Community Hospital, an additional 20 minutes or more, before beginning their own transport to the hospital. As we all know, minutes matter in medical emergencies. It can mean a difference in disability or death.

Also of note, the stretch of highway south of Pu'uuanahulu is plagued by devastating traffic collisions, and responding medics are coming from either Kailua or Waikoloa. This is an extreme challenge to survivability in high trauma events. An ambulance in this community would ensure the public health and safety of our residents and visitors, and allow the men and women of the Hawai'i Fire Department the best opportunity to serve them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB784.**

-Taylor Fujisawa

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 5:29:12 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kilihea Inaba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Committee Members,

This testimony is in support of HB784 which seeks funding for an ambulance at Makalei fire station on Hawai'i island. Hawai'i island is unique in that ambulances cover a large district, maybe not always in population but in square miles. The time it takes to respond to calls in District 21 (Makalei) and then transport to the hospital prolongs advanced life support services that are sometimes direly needed.

I can see that many 911 calls do not require advanced life support services and that the cause of the increase in 911 calls can be attributed to an increase in chronic illnesses and lack of good management of these illnesses. Nevertheless, until such time that there is better care for these individuals, 911 calls are on the rise. This is the most people that Hawai'i island, especially Kona, has ever seen in both residents and visitors with no increase in the number of EMS units that are to respond to emergencies. Please understand what a huge step forward for the Hawai'i island community as well as Fire/ EMS personnel this would be.

Thank you for your support,

Kilihea Inaba

Kaloko, Kona, Hawai'i

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 5:28:19 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

As a former resident of Kona on Hawai'i Island with elderly parents and family members in Koan, I am submitting my strong support for **HB784 HD1**, which seeks funding for an **additional advanced life support ambulance** to be stationed in **Makalei, North Kona**. This investment is critical to improving emergency medical response times and ensuring the safety of our growing community.

Currently, the emergency medical team stationed at the **Kailua-Kona Fire Station** is tasked with covering an expansive area, stretching from **Pu'uuanahulu to Sea View Circle**. This vast coverage area, combined with increasing traffic congestion and rugged terrain, significantly impacts response times—jeopardizing the health and safety of our community members during life-threatening emergencies.

As our population grows, the demand for **timely emergency medical services** also increases. Without additional resources, we risk continued delays in life-saving care. Stationing an **ambulance in Makalei** would **distribute emergency resources more effectively**, alleviate the burden on the Kailua-Kona team, and most importantly, **save lives**.

This is not just about faster response times—it's about ensuring that when a loved one collapses, when a keiki is injured, or when a kupuna experiences a medical emergency, **help can arrive without unnecessary delay**. Every minute counts in an emergency, and the addition of an ambulance in Makalei could mean the difference between life and death.

I urge you to support and pass **HB784 HD1** to protect the health and safety of our community. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Caroline Kunitake

LATE

Testimony in Support of an Additional Ambulance for North Kona

Presented to: Hawai'i State Legislators

Date: 2/5/25

By: Chad Sohriakoff, Fire Rescue Captain Kailua Kona

Good morning, Hawaii State Legislators my name is Chad Sohriakoff, and I am the Fire Rescue Captain at the Kailua Kona fire station. I would like to provide testimony here today to advocate for the urgent need for an additional ambulance in the North Kona District. As a first responder, I have witnessed firsthand the growing demand for emergency medical services in our community.

The district of Kona has experienced a significant increase in emergency calls due to population growth. The Kailua Kona fire station is the busiest Fire Station on the Island of Hawai'i. In 2024 alone the Kailua Kona fire Station received over 4,550 emergency calls.

Currently, our emergency response system in the district of Kona is under strain due to:

1. Longer Response Times- with limited ambulances, response times are increasing, putting lives at risk.
2. Overburdened EMS Personnel- our paramedics and EMTs are stretched thin, leading to burnout and staffing challenges.
3. Delays in Critical Care- In life-threatening situations, every second counts. A delay in emergency medical care can mean the difference between life and death.

Adding another ambulance to our emergency response fleet in Kona will:

- Reduce response times and improve patient outcomes.
- Enhance coverage across the county.
- Alleviate stress on our current EMS teams, improving their efficiency and well-being.

Investing in an additional ambulance is not just an expenditure; it is a critical investment in public safety and health. I urge this board to prioritize this request, ensuring that when residents call 911, help arrives swiftly.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Chad Sohriakoff

Fire Rescue Captain Kailua Kona Fire Station

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 11:08:53 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/12/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Carvalho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. As a Firefighter/EMT in Kailua-Kona, as well as a resident of district 21, I have seen the increasing need for more EMS support in Kona. The population of Kona has out grown EMS support and relief is needed to give our community the attention and care that it deserves.

Mahalo