



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

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

House Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol

April 1, 2025

10:00AM

Room 211

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the House Committee on Ways and Means:

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.



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

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

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

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

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

March 31, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair; and
Honorable Members

From: John C (Jack) Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA

RE: HB784 HD1
April 2, 2025 Hearing 10:01 am

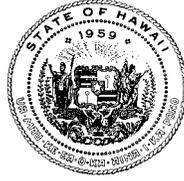
Position: SUPPORT

Testimony:

SHPDA's Hawai'i Island Subarea Advisory Council, and EMSAC (as SHPDA's Administrator, I am a member) strongly support this needed investment. The response times are unacceptable in this area of Hawai'i Island.

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



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-HD1
RELATING TO HEALTH**

SENATOR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: April 02, 2025

Room Number: 211

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) 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.

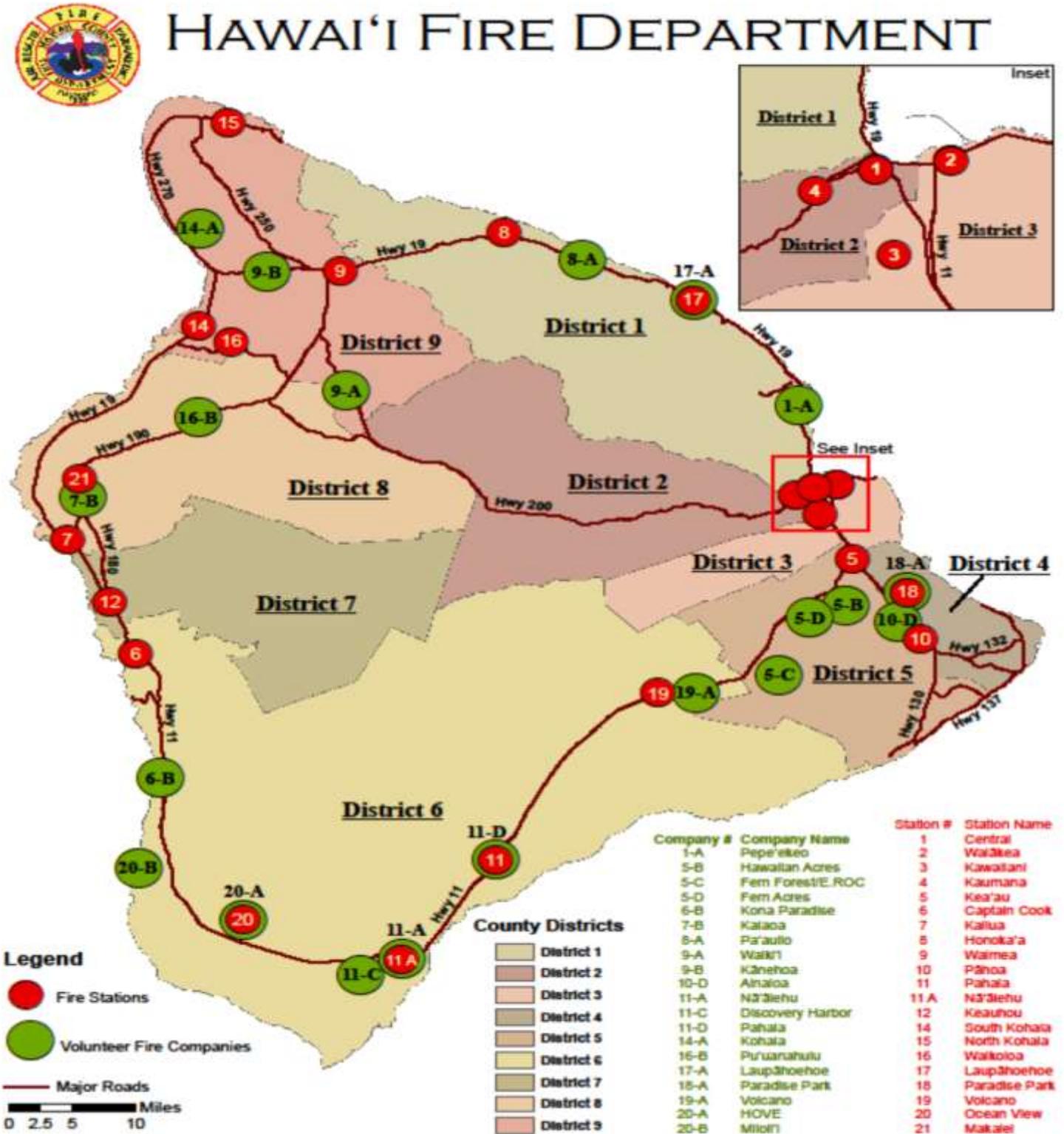
8 Placing an ambulance at Fire Station 21 in Makalei would help reduce the burden on Fire Station
9 7, improve response times, and improve access to lifesaving care for residents and visitors in
10 County Districts 7, 8, and 9. It is important to recognize the growing demand for emergency
11 resources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

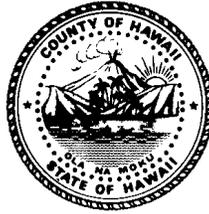
13 We recommend these findings be considered when determining the optimal location for a new
14 ambulance unit to ensure the delivery of effective, efficient, and equitable emergency medical
15 services.

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





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 31, 2025

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: **Support for HB784 HD1**, Relating to Health; Makes an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for Hawai'i Island to be based in Makalei
Hearing: **Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 10:01 a.m.**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

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

This crucial legislation seeks funding for an additional advanced life support ambulance to be stationed in Makalei, North Kona. As our island community continues to grow, ensuring timely access to emergency medical care is essential for public safety.

Currently, the emergency medical team based at the Kailua-Kona Fire Station is responsible for a vast service area—from Pu'uana'hulu to Sea View Circle. This extensive coverage, combined with rugged terrain and increasing traffic congestion, places a heavy strain on response times and our hardworking first responders. Delays in critical medical situations can mean the difference between life and death.

Adding an ambulance in Makalei would significantly improve response times, enhance life-saving capabilities, and relieve the burden on the Kailua-Kona unit. By strategically positioning emergency resources, we can ensure that residents and visitors in North Kona receive the urgent medical attention they need when every second counts.

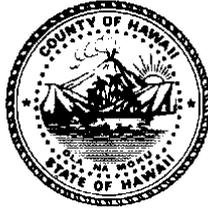
I strongly urge your support and passage of HB784 HD1 to make this vital investment in our community's health and safety. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holeka Goro Inaba".

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 Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

FROM: C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D., Mayor

DATE: March 31, 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 makes an appropriation, for the operation of an additional ambulance on the island of Hawai'i, to be based in the Makalei area of North Kona.

The residents of North Kona face significant challenges accessing timely medical care, with primary care services often located as far as thirty miles away. Emergency medical services are a vital lifeline, yet the only existing unit, based at the Kailua-Kona Fire Station, serves an expansive area, leading to delays that can be life threatening.

Establishing an ambulance in Makalei would improve emergency response times, ensuring faster medical intervention when every second counts. As North Kona's population continues to grow, particularly among older adults, the demand for urgent healthcare increases, making additional emergency resources essential. This ambulance would also relieve strain on the overburdened existing system, improving overall efficiency and service quality.

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

Mahalo, for your consideration of this critical issue.



March 31, 2025

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Senate
Hawaii State Legislature

Support for HB784 HD1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

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 written in a cursive, flowing style.

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



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

"Quality Healthcare For All"

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

April 2, 2025
10:01 AM
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 211 & 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.

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Chevelle Davis, MPH - Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 784, H.D. 1 – Relating to Health

Hearing: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 10:01 AM, Conference Room 211

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of H.B. No. 784 H.D. 1**, which seeks an appropriation for the operation of an additional ambulance for the Island of Hawai'i to be stationed in Makalei. The proposed bill is a crucial step in ensuring that children and families in the Makalei region have faster access to emergency medical services, ultimately safeguarding their health and well-being.

Ensuring Timely Emergency Care for Hawai'i's Keiki and Families

The Island of Hawai'i, with its vast geography and spread-out communities, presents unique challenges when it comes to accessing emergency medical services. Rural and remote areas, such as Makalei, are particularly vulnerable to delayed EMS response times due to their distance from existing ambulance stations. For families with young keiki, kūpuna, or individuals with chronic health conditions, a delay in emergency medical care can have dire consequences. This bill will directly address this issue by providing an ambulance stationed in Makalei, reducing response times, and ensuring that critical care arrives as quickly as possible in emergencies.

Protecting Vulnerable Populations—Keiki, Kūpuna, and Families

Keiki are among the most vulnerable in any emergency, and their health outcomes are particularly sensitive to delays in medical intervention. By establishing an additional ambulance in Makalei, this bill will help ensure that keiki and their families in the region receive the care they need when an emergency arises. With this measure, we can ensure that life-saving care is administered promptly to the youngest members of our community, who depend on fast and efficient access to medical services in critical moments.

Additionally, this bill will help protect other vulnerable groups, including kūpuna, who may also experience higher levels of health complications that require swift medical intervention. In rural

communities, where healthcare resources are limited, having a local ambulance service will be invaluable for ensuring timely access to critical care for these populations.

Addressing Health Disparities Across the Island

Equity is a priority for HCAN Speaks!, and we are deeply committed to addressing disparities in healthcare access for keiki and families in underserved communities. The rural areas of the Island of Hawai'i, including Makalei, have historically faced challenges in accessing timely medical care, particularly in emergency situations. This bill is a step toward addressing those disparities by ensuring that residents in these areas receive the same level of care as those in more urban regions.

Keiki and their families in Makalei should not face longer wait times or limited access to emergency medical services simply because of where they live. By supporting the creation of this additional ambulance service, we are helping to bridge the healthcare access gap and promoting greater equity across Hawai'i's communities.

Strengthening Hawai'i's Emergency Medical System

At HCAN Speaks!, we also recognize the importance of establishing a robust, resilient healthcare infrastructure for all Hawai'i's residents. This measure not only improves emergency response times in Makalei but also strengthens Hawai'i's emergency medical system as a whole. By strategically increasing coverage in underserved areas, this bill ensures that the entire island is better equipped to handle emergencies and respond to medical needs swiftly.

HCAN Speaks! strongly supports **H.B. No. 784, H.D. 1**, as it will improve emergency medical services on the Island of Hawai'i and provide critical support for keiki and families in the Makalei area. By ensuring faster response times and greater access to care, this bill directly addresses the health and safety needs of vulnerable populations, including our keiki, kūpuna, and those in rural communities. We urge you to pass this important measure to help ensure that every child and family in Hawai'i can receive the timely, life-saving care they need in an emergency.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony **IN SUPPORT** of this critical measure.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:01:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Garrett Nishihara	Testifying for Hawaii Fire Department	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

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:00:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keone Roback	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB784

Keone Roback

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:18:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher R Sloman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a citizen of Hawai‘i Island, I strongly support House Bill 784 to fund an ambulance based at Makalei. Our rural communities deserve reliable emergency medical services, and this bill addresses a critical need. Response times can mean the difference between life and death, and having a dedicated ambulance will ensure faster, more effective care for residents and visitors alike. I urge our lawmakers to pass this bill and invest in the safety and well-being of our island. Mahalo!

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:27:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Hirakami	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Adding an ambulance to North Kona is not just a smart decision—it's a lifesaving necessity. In medical emergencies, every second counts, and faster response times can mean the difference between life and death. Our community is growing, and the demand for emergency services is increasing. This additional ambulance will ensure that residents and visitors receive the urgent care they need when they need it most. Investing in this resource is investing in the safety and well-being of our community. Let's take this crucial step to protect lives and strengthen emergency response for all.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:39:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Delsyn Hirota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a community member of this district I fully support HB 784.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:59:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Duane Thompson Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HB784 and the funding of an ambulance service out of Makalei Fire Station. Currently, Kailua Fire Station's ambulance unit transports all patients to Kona Community Hospital (average 35-40min roundtrip) leaving the Kailua, Makalei, Kalaoa, Palisades communities wide open without Advanced Life Support (ALS) protection. The next available unit to service these communities would have to come from either neighboring Keauhou or Kealakekua Fire Stations delaying response to critical patients. Having an ambulance based out of Makalei Fire Station will help to alleviate these issues, reduce response times to emergencies and improve overall public safety with continuous ALS protection.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:25:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! This advanced life support ambulance is sorely needed for North Kona. In addition, it could also service the entire island AND, being stationed in Makalei, even fly westward to Maui and the cover the waters between the Big Island and Maui.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 4:20:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annie Sherman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We definitely need an ambulance service for Makalei. My husband has heart failure and had 3 heart attacks in the last few months. Currently ambulances in Kona only go to Kona Community Hospital emergency room in Kealahou. We need an ambulance from Makalei to go to North Island Community Hospital emergency room in Waimea. Kona Community Hospital emergency room is always crowded and long waits for hours. My husband was misdiagnosed and then sent home without being treated or recognized he was having a heart attack. We drove my husband to North Island Community Hospital 2 days later when his ankles were swollen, a symptom of heart failure. He had a heart attack in the Queens Waimea hospital and they flew him to Queens Honolulu the same night. His heart damage is already done. My point is, if Makalei has an ambulance service, we would have asked to have him taken to the Waimea hospital that first night to be treated right away instead of us driving him to Waimea two nights later. Kona Community Hospital is a substandard hospital often misdiagnosed and long waits. We desperately need an ambulance service to Waimea to save lives. Annie Sherman

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 4:22:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Mallery-Sayre	Testifying for The Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE On Ways and Means

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 10:01 AM

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'uanahulu 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 Mallery Sayre, Executive Director

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 4:43:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew McMullin	Testifying for Hawaii County Fire Department	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt McMullin, and I am a Firefighter/EMT stationed at Keauhou Fire Station. I'm writing today in strong support of the proposed bill to establish an ambulance unit in the Makalei district.

As a first responder, I frequently respond to medical emergencies in the Makalei area as a second-in unit—often when the Kailua ambulance is already committed to another call. When this happens, the Makalei district is left uncovered, with no ambulance stationed in the area to provide timely care. This creates a serious gap in emergency medical response, especially for a community located far from the nearest medical facility.

Response times are often significantly delayed, and in emergency medicine, every minute counts. These delays can mean the difference between life and death for critically ill or injured patients. Furthermore, transport times from Makalei to the hospital can be long, further compounding the issue for those in critical condition.

Establishing a dedicated ambulance in the Makalei district would directly improve patient outcomes by ensuring faster response times, immediate medical care, and quicker transport to medical facilities. It would also help ensure that other districts, like Kailua, are not overburdened or left uncovered while responding to calls in neighboring areas.

I strongly urge you to support this bill and help bring this much-needed resource to the Makalei community.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Matt McMullin

Firefighter/EMT

Keauhou Fire Station

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 5:37:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of HB784.

Currently Kailua Fire station houses an ambulance which covers a very large district, including the fire district of Makalei. Their call volume has been increasing yearly and is at a point now that places a citizens at risk for longer ambulance response times.

An Ambulance and crew at Makalei Fire Station will do many things for the community. This will relieve the call volume of Kailua ambulance creating better patient care, patient outcomes and will help stop crew burnout. Citizens of Makalei district will have lower response times which leads to better patient care and help when minutes matter.

Thank you for your time in this matter,

Matt Loper

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 5:54:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bill Bugbee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony Submission

Submission Date: March 31, 2025

Subject: B784 HD1, regarding funding for an ambulance at Makalei Fire Station

Submission in Favor of B784 HD1

The North Kona area of Hawai‘i Island (96740) consists of a mixture of residential and commercial development, and per the recent US Census, over 94 people per square mile.

Emergency ambulance services in Hawai‘i are required to provide a 95% response rate within 20 minutes for calls in their service area. A standard which applies to both ground and air ambulances, and is designed to ensure timely response to emergencies.

B784 HD1 will ensure an emergency response ambulance will be based at the Malakai Fire Station. However, without an ambulance based at the Malakai Fire Station or nearby, distance, traffic, and other factors ensure an ineffective and life threatening response window of greater than 20 minutes, and that will costs lives.

North Kona medical emergencies are served by the island’s two (nearest) hospitals located at opposite ends of West Hawai‘i Island, and both are over 30 road miles from the North Kona Malakai Fire Station. Even with emergency sirens and lights, on average North Kona area travel times to one of the two area hospitals is greater than 40 minutes travel time.

Please ensure this public safety bill, HB784 HD1 is passed.

Thank you,

W.M. Bugbee

Kailua-Kona, 96740

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 6:20:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support the bill to fund an ambulance at the Makalei fire station. North Kona's population continues to grow and it's prudent that we get an ambulance there to help its residents. The ambulance from the Kailua fire station can take anywhere from 10-20 mins depending on where they are due to calls. The second in ambulance is at the Keauhou fire station and that is about 20 mins to get to Makalei. Every second counts when a pt has a MI, CVA, or major trauma. We need to be able to provide consistent quick ALS care to that district in a timely manner. Passing this bill will provide North Kona residents the care they need. Thanks.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 7:08:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Yamagata Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Being born in raised on Hawaii Island means that we have a deep commitment to taking care our our island and our community. As a Fire Equipment Operator for Hawaii County Fire Department, I feel that this added ambulance to our fleet will help us better provide our community with a normal response opposed to a very delayed response time due to geographical challenges. We can add this ambulance and help so many more lives when seconds matter. This ambulance is not a WANT, it has BEEN A NEED for this island, way past due. Mahalo for this consideration.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 7:55:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Selena Vanapruks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because yes Hawai'i Island should have another ambulance.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:06:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members,

This testimony is in support of HB784 that seeks to provide 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.

911 calls are on the rise with no end in site. This is the most people that Hawai'i island, especially Kona with its recent influx in the last 5 years, 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

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:19:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

I believe that passing this bill will ensure a faster response and the safety of the Kona community for ALS critical care. There are times where the Kailua ALS ambulance are responding to other calls and the next closest ALS ambulance is located in Keauhou. If Keauhou Ambulance happens to be busy on another cal then the next ALS ambulance would come from Kealakekua. This bill will ensure that another ALS ambulance will be providing care within the north district of Kona.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:35:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Tsamoydakis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I sorry this bill. This district of the island has so much residential infrastructure and so many EMS based 911 calls originate here; it only makes sense that they need to have an ambulance. It's silly that it's even taken this long for it to be considered. This will be one of the top 6 busiest ambulances on the island- only less busy than Hilo, Kailua, Pahoa, Kea'au, Haihai ambulances. What a disservice to the residents of this district that their closest ALS ambulance is in Kailua- which is usually dispatched to its own in-district calls, leaving the nearest ambulance to come from Keauhou! Unacceptable!

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:58:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonah marks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of HB784. I live in the kalaoa area and have seen many instances where the Kailua kona ambulance and Keahou ambulances are both occupied with calls resulting in long wait times for other emergencies. And additional ambulance at the Makalei station would only prove to be extremely beneficial for the health and safety of all of Kona.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:07:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

The need for an ambulance for the district of Makalei/Kalaoa is more prevalent than ever. The population of this district has grown a lot in the last decade, and the response times from the nearest ambulance and transport times to the nearest hospital are dangerously long. I have a family member who had a recent emergency in the Makalei district, and with Kailua's Medic 7 responding from District 7, Advanced Life Support measures had to be taken. He had to be flown out to Queens and is currently in the ICU. This is all to say, Kona Hospital is at least 45 minutes from his house. Had there been an ambulance at Makalei, this family member of mine would have gotten ALS medical care much sooner, as well as the option to be transported to Kona ER much sooner. These are the situations in which seconds and minutes make all the difference.

Not only would the placement of this ambulance save many lives, but it would also decrease the workload on the busiest fire district on the Island. Kailua has been the busiest fire district in the past couple of years, with the majority of their calls being medical. Kailua's medic (Medic 7) also has a much larger area to cover compared to all other response vehicles in that district. Due to the lack of an ambulance in the Makalei district, Medic 7 has to respond to all emergency calls between Pu'uanahulu and Sea View Circle. That is over 20 miles that one ambulance is responsible for. The people of Kona deserve faster and more accessible emergency medical care. Thank you for considering this ambulance and reading our testimonies.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 8:16:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

I live in the Kalaoa area and fully support another ambulance for Makalei station. From the Mamalahoa/Holualoa junction to the Makalei fire station all there is are residential subdivisions which I'm sure are almost 100% full, and many with multiple familys living on property as there is a housing shortage. That being said, with population growth and traffic I feel it is crucial to have another ambulance at the Makalei station. It seems there are one if not multiple accidents daily in this area, along with health emergencys I'm sure.

Another ambulance in this area would not only help aleviate pressure at station 7 so they can be more efficient- as they are overloaded as it is, but would help to get emergency help to incidents in the Hina Lani, Kaloko, Kaiminani, Coastview, Makalei, and Puuanuhulu (I'm sure theres a few areas I missed) more efficiently. That would not only aleviate traffic hold ups but also and more importantly save lives at times if there is a quicker responce.

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 9:01:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 784 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Aloha Members of the Ways and Means 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: 4/1/2025 10:50:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Masuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am formally submitting in writing, my support for HB784, as I know it will greatly benefit the people in my district.

Thank you

michael masuda

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 12:55:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Mirels	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support having an Ambulance at Makalei Fire Station

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:02:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Presiadós	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Michael Presiadós with the Hawai‘i Fire Department. I’ve been with the department for nearly eight years and currently serve as a Fire Medical Specialist II (Paramedic) at the Kailua Fire Station, A Platoon. I’ve also worked as a firefighter at both the Keauhou and Kealakekua Fire Stations, and I’ve seen firsthand the challenges we face across the Kona district when it comes to emergency medical response.

I’m writing in full support of adding a new ambulance unit to the Makalei Fire Station.

Right now, the only ambulance covering all of Kona is based at the Kailua Fire Station. With a growing population—both residents and visitors—our call volume continues to increase, and one ambulance simply cannot keep up. It’s not unusual for us to run back-to-back calls for a full 24-hour shift without a break. This isn’t sustainable and puts both patients and emergency personnel at risk.

Geography adds to the challenge. If a call comes in from Kalaoa, Kona Palisades, or anywhere in the Makalei area while our unit is out, the next closest ambulance may be responding from Keauhou or Kealakekua—up to 20 to 25 minutes away. And that’s just the response time, not including assessment, treatment, and transport. That kind of delay can be critical in life-threatening emergencies.

Placing an ambulance at Makalei would make a major difference—not just for that area, but for the entire Kona district. It would:

- Reduce response times, especially for communities in North Kona
- Provide coverage when the Kailua unit is already on a call
- Help prevent medic burnout by balancing the workload
- Improve patient outcomes by getting advanced care to them faster
- Reduce wear and tear on current units and lower long-term maintenance costs

I understand the concerns — budget, staffing, and whether this is necessary. The reality is that we are already operating at our limit. Delayed care leads to worse outcomes and, in many cases, higher long-term costs for the healthcare system. We're not asking for something excessive — we're asking for a unit that meets the needs of the community today.

Makalei is the right location. The station is already in place. All that's needed is the ambulance and staffing. With this addition, we'll be able to respond faster, serve more effectively, and improve outcomes for the people of Kona.

I respectfully ask for your support in establishing an ALS (advanced life support) ambulance at the Makalei Fire Station.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Michael Presiados

Fire Medical Specialist II (Paramedic)

Kailua Fire Station – A Platoon

LATE

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 2:04:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Fukumoto-Ben	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A LIFE SUPPORT AMBULANCE AND STAFF AT MAKALEI FIRE STATION IS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY FOR THIS COMMUNITY AND WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED!

HB-784-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:02:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Presiadós	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Michael Presiadós with the Hawai‘i Fire Department. I’ve been with the department for nearly eight years and currently serve as a Fire Medical Specialist II (Paramedic) at the Kailua Fire Station, A Platoon. I’ve also worked as a firefighter at both the Keauhou and Kealakekua Fire Stations, and I’ve seen firsthand the challenges we face across the Kona district when it comes to emergency medical response.

I’m writing in full support of adding a new ambulance unit to the Makalei Fire Station.

Right now, the only ambulance covering all of Kona is based at the Kailua Fire Station. With a growing population—both residents and visitors—our call volume continues to increase, and one ambulance simply cannot keep up. It’s not unusual for us to run back-to-back calls for a full 24-hour shift without a break. This isn’t sustainable and puts both patients and emergency personnel at risk.

Geography adds to the challenge. If a call comes in from Kalaoa, Kona Palisades, or anywhere in the Makalei area while our unit is out, the next closest ambulance may be responding from Keauhou or Kealakekua—up to 20 to 25 minutes away. And that’s just the response time, not including assessment, treatment, and transport. That kind of delay can be critical in life-threatening emergencies.

Placing an ambulance at Makalei would make a major difference—not just for that area, but for the entire Kona district. It would:

- Reduce response times, especially for communities in North Kona
- Provide coverage when the Kailua unit is already on a call
- Help prevent medic burnout by balancing the workload
- Improve patient outcomes by getting advanced care to them faster
- Reduce wear and tear on current units and lower long-term maintenance costs

I understand the concerns — budget, staffing, and whether this is necessary. The reality is that we are already operating at our limit. Delayed care leads to worse outcomes and, in many cases, higher long-term costs for the healthcare system. We're not asking for something excessive — we're asking for a unit that meets the needs of the community today.

Makalei is the right location. The station is already in place. All that's needed is the ambulance and staffing. With this addition, we'll be able to respond faster, serve more effectively, and improve outcomes for the people of Kona.

I respectfully ask for your support in establishing an ALS (advanced life support) ambulance at the Makalei Fire Station.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Michael Presiados

Fire Medical Specialist II (Paramedic)

Kailua Fire Station – A Platoon