



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HR43
URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO WORK WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO
CONSTRUCT AN EMERGENCY ACCESS ROAD ON THE WAI'ANAЕ COAST**

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

Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 11:00 AM
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") **supports** HR43.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

The Military Affairs Council has been working with the Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT), Army Garrison Hawaii and Navy Region Hawaii to provide safe passage along Kolekole Pass in time of emergency, whether natural or man-made. There was a practice run with Hawaii Emergency Management Agency and partners in February. We are grateful to HDOT for making early investments in road improvements. The Army and Navy are committed to doing their part and are requesting funds as a part of this partnership. The Hawaii Congressional Delegation is also a most supportive partner in this collective commitment to ensure that Oahu's westside community members will have an alternative road to get to safety in time of emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support.



House Committee on Public Safety

Testimony on HR43

Relating to an Emergency Access Road on the Wai‘anae Coast

April 2nd, 2025

11:00 AM

Room 411

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) is a cross-sector collaborative interested in strengthening climate and health resiliency in Hawai‘i. CCHWG supports this resolution, which urges the City & County of Honolulu to work with stakeholders to construct an emergency access road on the Wai‘anae Coast.

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Climate Change and Health Working Group

In Support of HR43

Relating to an Emergency Access Road on the Wai‘anae Coast

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the House Committee on Public Safety

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) supports this measure, which urges the City and County of Honolulu to collaborate with the United States military, Department of Transportation, and Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency to develop an emergency access road along the Wai‘anae Coast. As a cross-sector collaborative focused on protecting public health in an era of accelerating climate impacts, we recognize that reliable evacuation routes are vital to resilience and well-being—especially in areas prone to extreme weather, wildfires, and other emergencies.

In January 2025, our Working Group held a community listening session in Wai‘anae. Residents who attended expressed deep concerns about the lack of accessible evacuation routes, noting the dangers of relying solely on Farrington Highway. Attendees shared firsthand accounts of

children trapped on buses during a 2018 fire, the potential risks for kūpuna needing rapid evacuation, and the anxiety caused by not having an alternative route. These worries echo lessons learned from the 2023 Lahaina wildfire, where insufficient emergency access hindered timely evacuations and contributed to devastating outcomes.

A secondary access road would address a range of public health concerns identified during the listening session. Without an alternative route, residents may face delayed emergency medical care, potential harm from wildfire smoke or flooding, and increased stress or anxiety. This resolution's call for inclusive community engagement is vital to ensuring that solutions are appropriate for local needs, protect public health, and respect the area's environmental and cultural context.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Legislature to pass this resolution. Constructing an alternative emergency route for the Wai'anae Coast is a proactive, life-saving measure that will reduce risk, support physical and mental well-being, and honor the perspectives shared by community members during our listening session.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. The climate crisis is a health crisis.

Sincerely,

The Climate Change & Health Working Group

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:18:16 AM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zel Kealoha | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this bill

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:46:53 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tanya L Kaahaaina | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

An emergency access road on the Waianae coast is vital for our community. My 'ohana and I support this bill.

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 4:04:54 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Elizabeth Kekahuna | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

In support, we need another way out of Waianae incase of an emergency. This emergency access route will be the life line for our community.

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 3:32:38 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Michael I Rice | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I stand in SUPPORT of this resolution. I am a lifelong resident of the Waianae coast, I've grown up here and have noticed traffic always getting worse. I remember when a hostage situation lasting more than 12 hours shut down the entire Waianae coast. The response to that was to build an 'access road' less than 10 yards from where the hostage situation took place, and if the exact same situation had occurred, would have shut down the bypass road for safety reasons as well.

While projects like the widening of Farrington Highway and adding turn lanes along most of it (for some strange reason stopping sort of one of the worst choke points on this side of the island) and increasing public transit has helped in small amounts to help alleviate traffic, it is not enough. The Bypass Roads put in help slightly in situations when they are authorized to be open but they are not a solution and only help in certain situations.

A bypass road is long overdue for Waianae, however I would urge that this bypass road be constructed with the intention of being permanently open and not locked behind a gate or past a military checkpoint. While repairing Kolekole Pass would be excellent for use by the military and in Emergencies, other options must also be considered, including the building of tunnels or passes over/through the mountains.

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 5:01:51 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Kelli Timoteo | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HR43

House of Representatives, Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i
Regular Session of 2025

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kelli Timoteo, and I strongly support HR43. The Wai‘anae Coast relies on a single roadway—Farrington Highway—leaving our community vulnerable in emergencies. Any road closure due to accidents, fires, or natural disasters traps residents with no way out.

The Lahaina wildfire showed the deadly consequences of inaccessible emergency routes. Currently, Pa‘akea and Lualualei Naval roads are inadequate due to locked gates and narrow, single-lane sections. Kolekole Pass is unreliable due to landslides and weather conditions. Our community needs a safe, accessible emergency access road now.

I urge the City and County of Honolulu and all involved agencies to take immediate action to protect the people of Wai‘anae, Mākaha, Mā‘ili, and Nānākuli. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kell Timoteo

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 5:06:41 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Boy Timoteo | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HR43

House of Representatives, Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i
Regular Session of 2025

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Boy Timoteo, and as a lifelong Wai‘anae resident, I am deeply frustrated that no real plan has ever been put in place to provide our community with a reliable emergency access road. For years, we have raised concerns, yet nothing has changed. Every time there’s an accident, brush fire, or road closure on Farrington Highway, we are completely cut off, putting our families in danger.

The tragedy in Lahaina proved what happens when there are no clear evacuation routes. Here in Wai‘anae, Pa‘akea and Lualualei Naval roads are unreliable due to locked gates and single-lane sections. Kolekole Pass is not a real option because of landslides and unpredictable closures. If a major disaster happens, our people will be trapped with no way out.

This is not just an inconvenience—it’s a life-threatening failure. We need real action now. I urge the City and County of Honolulu and all agencies involved to stop delaying and finally create a safe, accessible emergency route for the people of Wai‘anae.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Boy Timoteo

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:01:41 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Shane N Kekahuna | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

In support, we need another way out of Wai'anae incase of an emergency.

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:29:45 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ciera | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

We need a better emergency access on our coast!!!! For the safety of our people!

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 9:28:34 AM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Yvonne Alvarado | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I, Yvonne Alvarado is in Strong Support with Bill HR43 HD1. God forbid another tragedy was to happen just like Lāhainā.

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:03:52 AM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Barbara Kalama | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HR43

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HR43, urging the construction of an emergency access road along the Wai‘anae Coast. As a member of the community, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges our residents face when Farrington Highway is blocked due to accidents, flooding, or other emergencies. Without an alternative route, families, kupuna, and emergency responders are left stranded, creating serious safety concerns.

This resolution is a crucial step toward protecting our community. An emergency access road would provide peace of mind, ensuring that residents can safely evacuate and that first responders can reach those in need without delay. I urge the City and County of Honolulu to take action in collaboration with key stakeholders and prioritize this much-needed infrastructure for our community’s safety and well-being.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Kalama

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:18:16 AM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zel Kealoha | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this bill

HR-43-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 3:26:29 PM

Testimony for PBS on 4/2/2025 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Frank Schultz | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this initiative.