

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1629  
A BILL RELATING TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT G. F. LEE  
DIRECTOR OF CIVIL DEFENSE

February 5, 2009

Chair Hanohano and Committee Members:

I am Bob Lee, Director of Civil Defense, State Department of Defense. I am providing written testimony in support of House Bill 1629.

There is a significant shortfall of public emergency shelter facilities throughout the State of Hawaii. In view of the potential effects of a strong storm or hurricane, the shortfall in public emergency shelters affects our ability to protect our residents and visitors including vulnerable population groups and household pets.

House Bill 1629 proposes to require that any project for new state or county buildings containing more than 10,000 SF or requiring more than \$10,000,000 for its planning, design, and construction must be reviewed by the Director of Defense. In short, we support this measure as it will contribute toward building our public emergency shelter capabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of this measure.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Public Safety  
February 5, 2009 at 9:15 AM

by

Brian K. Minaai

Associate Vice President for Capital Improvements, University of Hawai'i

### **HB 1629 – RELATING TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS**

Chair Hanohano, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the House Committee on Public Safety

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 1629 – Relating to Emergency Shelters. The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of the HB 1629; however, we offer the following comments and concerns:

1. We are unclear on whether HB 1629 references the Counties' Director of Civil Defense and/or the State's Director of Civil Defense.
2. HB 1629 requires that State and County agencies consult with the Director of Civil Defense on the potential use of a new building for use as an emergency shelter. We believe the consultation process with Civil Defense should occur earlier in the development of facilities. Specifically, we recommend that such consultation take place during the preparation of campuses' long range physical development plan for University of Hawai'i campuses. During the campus planning process, campus officials, with the Director of Civil Defense, shall evaluate the need for emergency shelters in light of existing buildings and future planned development. For your information, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is retrofitting and hardening the Pacific Ocean Science and Technology Center building to serve as an emergency shelter to accommodate the 3,000 students in the surrounding student dormitories.
3. We do not believe all new University buildings in excess of 10,000 square feet or \$10 million should be considered as an emergency shelter; rather, only select, strategically located University buildings on each campus.
4. We are concerned with potential delays in a building's development due to the length of time the consultation process may take with the Director of Civil Defense.
5. We are also concerned with the financial impact to the development of University facilities if all buildings that are in excess of 10,000 square feet or \$10 million must be retrofitted to serve as an emergency shelter.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 1629.



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 101 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814  
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V/TDD) • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 5, 2009

### TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

#### House Bill 1629 – Relating to Emergency Shelters

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide board with seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor, thirteen (13) of whom are persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

We support House Bill 1629 – Relating to Emergency Shelters. DCAB has been collaborating with the Department of Health and State Civil Defense by hosting an Interagency Working Group on the Emergency Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities and Special Health Needs since 2006. The working group drafted an action plan to ensure individuals with disabilities and special health needs are included in notification and sheltering during an emergency or disaster. We are familiar with the shortage of suitable shelter space and have discussed various options to increase the number. Requiring new State or county buildings to be constructed in a manner that will allow its use as an emergency shelter was an option considered. Construction projects for new and renovated State and county buildings are already reviewed by DCAB for physical accessibility for persons with disabilities. Having new and existing facilities designed or renovated to meet standards established for emergency shelters will increase the number of shelter space available for everyone in the community. We urge you to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING  
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI  
Executive Director