

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 383
A BILL RELATING TO CIVIL DEFENSE

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 383.

Part I of House Bill 383 amends HRS Chapter 46 by allowing counties prior to issuing permits to require developers to install outdoor warning sirens for any new residential housing developments of fifty or more units. The bill further stipulates that the outdoor warning system specifications and their installation will be determined by the Department of Defense. We believe this is a positive step toward reducing the costs to install, replace, and maintain outdoor warning systems.

Part II of House Bill 383 proposes to require the Disability Communications Access Board to identify internationally recognized symbols to be used in warning and risk communications for vulnerable population groups. If the intent of Part II is to communicate with other than the deaf and hearing impaired, the State Civil Defense may be the appropriate agency to identify internationally recognized symbols.

We support House Bill 383.

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



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

House Bill 383 – Relating to Civil Defense

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.

DCAB is commenting only on Part II Sections 3 and 4 requesting our office to identify internationally recognized symbols that may be transmitted through various forms of visual digital communications, such as cellular telephones, computers, and television, in the event of a disaster or emergency.

We support the intent of Part II on page 3 of the bill and believe that research to identify these symbols is needed. However, if this research is not a disability policy issue but one related to emergency notification of the general population. State Civil Defense should be the lead and we are willing to assist. We note that the bill states that the target population is not only a person who is deaf or hard of hearing but anyone unable to comprehend verbal or written communications in the languages commonly used in the State. This could include people with limited English proficiency that may not have a disability.

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

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director