

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 990
A BILL RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

PRESENTATION TO THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

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

February 12, 2009

Chair Hanohano and Committee members:

I am Major General Bob Lee, Director of Civil Defense, State Department of Defense. I am providing written testimony in opposition to House Bill 990.

We oppose House Bill 990 because the proposed bill establishes an office of disaster preparedness and disaster preparedness commission under the Department of Transportation for the purpose of developing a comprehensive disaster preparedness plan for the State of Hawaii. The proposed bill will duplicate ongoing emergency preparedness functions and planning performed by the State Civil Defense Division.

If this proposal is passed, there will be considerable cost implications generated by creating a new office of the director of disaster preparedness in the Department of Transportation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony that opposes this bill.

Testimony of Gerald Peters
and The Hawaii Lumber Products Association
(PBS) House Committee on Public Safety Thursday Feb 12, 2009. Room 309. 8:30
am RE: HOUSE BILL 990 – RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Chair Hanohano, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members;

My name is Gerald Peters. I am testifying on behalf of The Hawaii Lumber Products Association, as well as myself as an individual with nearly 20 years experience in disaster preparedness, and General Licensed Contracting in Hawaii, in support of this legislation.

We wholeheartedly support the need to establish a highly visible activity for preparedness, and especially laud the section which provides implementation of incentives for residential, commercial and governmental retrofitting for damage mitigation, such as tax credits.

There is nearly \$200 million in the hurricane relief fund. Investing in mitigation incentives is already authorized under the HHRF statute, and has a direct nexus to the fund's overall purpose to lessen the magnitude of future disasters such as hurricanes.

We are uncertain as to the best management direction, staffing, and operating plan, but do urge non duplication of current State and County functions, such as the State Mitigation Plan produced under the auspices of State and County Civil Defense Agencies for and approved by FEMA.

We also recommend organizational flexibility so as not to hamper some noteworthy readiness improvements which have been made at the State and County levels since the time of the Asian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

We believe this legislation's implementation must also avoid slowing any reaction time to disasters. Nor, of course, should the end organizational result unnecessarily bureaucratize, delay, and/or hamper creation and implementation of long overdue programs to address a major lack of public awareness, nor slow the creation of incentives for home, condo, commercial building, and business owners to take preparedness actions on their own.

Thank you.

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Alison Powers
Executive Director

TESTIMONY OF ALISON POWERS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
Representative Faye P. Hanohano, Chair
Representative Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 12, 2009
8:30 a.m.

HB 990

Chair Hanohano, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the Committee, my name is Alison Powers, Executive Director of Hawaii Insurers Council. Hawaii Insurers Council is a non-profit trade association of property and casualty insurance companies licensed to do business in Hawaii. Member companies underwrite approximately 60% of all property and casualty insurance premiums in the state.

Hawaii Insurers Council supports the intent of H.B. 990. Hawaii Insurers Council believes it is prudent for the state to have a disaster preparedness plan in place before the next disaster occurs.

In addition, we do offer the following comments:

The inclusion of "human-caused catastrophes" in the definition of "disaster" appears to include acts of terrorism, which could possibly conflict with Homeland Security laws. If it is the intent of the committee to include disaster preparedness for some human-caused catastrophes, but not acts of terrorism, then acts of terrorism should be specifically excluded in the definition of "disaster."

Hawaii Insurers Council also suggests that "fire" be replaced with "wildfire" under the definition of "natural hazard" because it is more closely aligned with extraordinary situations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SAFETY**

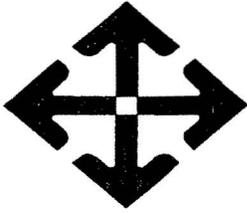
February 12, 2009

House Bill 990 Relating to Disaster Preparedness

Chair Hanohano and members of the House Committee on Public Safety, I am Rick Tsujimura, representing State Farm Insurance Companies, a mutual company owned by its policyholders. State Farm supports House Bill 990 Relating to Disaster Preparedness.

Disaster preparedness is desperately needed in a state which is subject to hurricanes, tidal waves, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanoes. We believe that this measure may assist homeowners to be prepared in the event of natural disasters and will prevent wide spread catastrophes or destruction such as occurred in the gulf. Discouraging those from constructing homes in disaster prone areas is crucial to avoiding loss of property and life. We encourage the committee to act favorably upon this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.



The Hawaii Business League

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February 12, 2009

Testimony To: House Committee on Public Safety
Representative Faye P. Hanohano, Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons
President

Subject: H.B. 990 – RELATING TO DIASTER PREPAREDNESS

Chair Hanohano and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, President of the Hawaii Business League, a small business service organization.

We are in support of this bill.

Advanced planning is the key to mitigating the results of almost any disaster. Often times, when we think of these disasters, we think of the individual citizens that are impacted however, it is also the small business in and around that area that typically are impacted as well. This may be because of employees who must attend to personal issues instead of reporting to work or it may be that the business is now "swamped" based on the demand for services that the business offers. Either way, there is an impact.

We support this bill because we believe that it is very important to advance plan for any kind of disaster in order to adopt mitigation policies, formulate incentives and promulgate requirements. That can be achieved with the establishment of a disaster preparedness commission and based on that, we support this bill.

Thank you.