



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB 1016
Relating to Health**

SENATOR JOSH GREEN, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 4, 2015 1:15 PM Room Number: 414

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates an unspecified amount of EMS Special Funds (ESF) in fiscal year 2015-
2 2016. The measure requests an additional advanced life support ambulance unit including a vehicle,
3 personnel, and equipment.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department recognizes the significant challenges to providing health care
5 and emergency services to the Puna Community. The Department is projecting a shortfall in ESF to fund
6 the existing ambulance contracts across the state for FY16 and FY17. The Department respectfully
7 defers to the Governor's Executive Budget request for the Department of Health's appropriations and
8 personnel priorities. Funding an additional unit would have a negative impact on existing services.

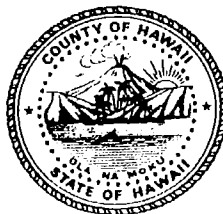
9 This measure seeks to augment the Hawaii County emergency medical services system for the residents
10 and visitors of the Puna area. Hawaii County currently operates 16 ground ambulance units on the
11 island of Hawaii. The last unit added was unit 3, Hawaii Ocean View Estates, in fiscal year 2005. Hawaii
12 County has budgeted funds to secure and administer a backup 911 contract with American Medical
13 Response to aid with increased 911 calls.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

15 **Offered Amendments:** none

MITCHELL D. ROTH
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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1016

A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Sen. Josh Green, Chair
Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 4, 2015, 1:15 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 414

Honorable Chair Green, Vice-Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Health, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i submits the following testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 1016.

This measure appropriates funds to establish an advanced life support ambulance to be based in Puna on the island of Hawai'i, including the acquisition of a vehicle and equipment and personnel costs for state-certified emergency medical services personnel.

Puna has become the fastest growing district in the State, with a current population of more than 45 thousand residents. Passage of this Bill will provide a new advanced life support ambulance which has the potential of reducing death and disability not only of the residents, but also to visitors to the island of Hawai'i.

Data from the Hawai'i County Fire Department shows that over the past five years, there have been approximately 180 emergency medical service incidents per month within Puna. Due to the projected population surge to increase to approximately 75 thousand residents within the next 15 years, the need for an additional ambulance in this area has never been greater.

Coupled with the ongoing lava threat and the current strain on critical transportation infrastructure in Puna, the travel time to Hilo is expected to increase from an average of 30 minutes to two hours. For those reasons, this life support ambulance will be a literal life saver for the residents and visitors in Puna.

The Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i supports the passage of Senate Bill No. 1016. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Roth", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Mitchell D. Roth
Prosecuting Attorney
County of Hawai'i

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



Darren J. Rosario
Fire Chief

Renwick J. Victorino
Deputy Fire Chief

County of Hawai'i
HAWAI'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
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February 2, 2015

The Honorable Senator Josh Green, Chair
Committee on Health
State Capitol, Room 414
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Green:

Subject: SB 1016, RELATING TO HEALTH

I am Darren J. Rosario, Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department (HFD). The HFD supports SB 1016 to make an appropriation for an Advanced Life Support (ALS) Ambulance to be based in the Puna District.

The EMS needs of the residents of Puna are centrally served by HFD Medic's 5 and 10 out of the Kea'au and Pāhoa Fire stations respectively. These units are strategically based to serve the bulk of Puna's population handling 91% of EMS calls in Puna. Medic 19 out of the Volcano Fire Station serves a less populated area of Puna but fills a wide geographical gap (45 miles) between Kea'au and Ka'u.

Furthermore, the district of Puna is currently under the imminent threat of the "June 27 lava flow" that is poised to severely impact services to thousands of lower Puna residents. Essentially, the lava flow will cut residents off from critical transportation infrastructure which, is their lifeline to amongst other things, health care. The area of lower Puna, currently impacted by the lava flow is home to nearly 10,000 people who live scattered about the nearly 100 square miles predicted to be isolated.. Furthermore, a recent survey conducted by the University of Hawai'i at Hilo shows that 1,101 households within the impact area house at least one person with a disability. Access to primary and acute medical care will be severely delayed due to lengthened travel times. The current time from Pāhoa to Hilo via Highway 130 is approximately 30 minutes without traffic. Once the flow crosses highway 130 and the alternate Makai routes, travel by ground will go through the Chain of Craters road and take approximately 2 hours without traffic. Given these challenges an ALS ambulance in the community is an absolute necessity to the well being of the residents within the impact area.



Retrospective data analysis from the Hawai'i Fire Department shows that approximately 180 EMS incidents are generated from within the impact area per month.

The County of Hawai'i has been proactively preparing since the threat became a reality. One proactive measure taken has been the creation of a new full service Fire Station, the "Pāhoa Village Fire Station" located within the impact area, in the town of Pāhoa. In addition to Fire Protection Apparatus, the station houses a fully staffed Advanced Life Support Ambulance funded entirely by the County of Hawai'i in order to meet the acute health care needs of the community. Funding of each county's Emergency Medical Services System is a function of the State of Hawai'i. The current EMS budget provided to the County of Hawai'i by the State of Hawai'i cannot cover the expenses of operating this additional ALS ambulance; State EMSIPB/DOH has indicated that no funding is available. For the best interest of the health care needs of lower Puna, the County of Hawai'i has been funding the Pāhoa Village ambulance since November 1, 2014. In addition, the Hawai'i Fire Department (HFD) has developed a partnership with private ambulance provider American Medical Response (AMR) to serve in a "back up" role within lower Puna. HFD is also developing a partnership and has conducted training with private air medical service provider Hawai'i Life Flight (HLF) to assist in aeromedical patient transport out of the impact area for time sensitive EMS cases.

- In 2007-2008 the Puna district accounted for 3,970 or 21% of all EMS calls in the County of Hawai'i.
- In 2013-2014 the Puna district accounted for 5,149 calls or 27% of all EMS calls in the County of Hawai'i.

The District of Puna is roughly the size of the Island of Kauai, has a population of 45,326 and has become one of the fastest growing districts in the State of Hawai'i with a population increase of 44% since 2000. Over the next 15 years the population of Puna is expected to grow to 75,000, nearly half the current population of Hawai'i Island.

Access to primary health care in Puna is challenging for the community, for many Puna residents primary care services are as much as 30 miles away, coupled with economic and transportation challenges EMS has become the access point for health care to many in Puna. This will be even more dominant in the face of isolation from the lava flow event.

The volume of EMS calls have crept up year by year with no increase in EMS services to the Puna district; with the projected population increase this will no doubt continue and impact our ability to deliver high quality EMS services. As mentioned previously, 911 EMS cases in Puna account for more than 27% of all 911 calls in Hawai'i County, to compound this, the round trip time from response to back in quarters on a patient transport is approximately two hours with the current roadway infrastructure in place. This will increase to a four hour minimum once the lava flow crosses Highway 130. It is become common for Medics 5 and 10 to have ten or more transports in a twenty-four hour shift. The resulting simple math means; our personnel can essentially be on the road for nearly twenty-four consecutive hours. As a result the potential for fatigue, errors in judgment, driving and overall safety are of great concern for our personnel.

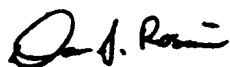
The Honorable Senator Josh Green, Chair
February 2, 2015
Page 3

This increase in Puna's call volume is also having a collateral impact on two of our departments busiest units located in Hilo (Medic's 1 and 3) who respond to a combined 34 % of all Hawai'i County 911 EMS calls. Medic's 1 and 3 cover the Puna District when the Puna units are unavailable. Since 2007 there has been a 50% increase in responses from Medics 1 and 3 into the Puna District and there are numerous times when the majority of our East Hawai'i EMS assets Medics 1, 3, 5, 10, 19 are all covering calls in the Puna District leaving the most populated area (Hilo) without adequate services. This has resulted in increased 911 back costs to AMR. In the 2011 – 2014 fiscal periods we averaged nearly \$15,000 per month in 911 back up charges to AMR.

This request is presented to meet the ever-increasing demands for Emergency Medical Services on Hawai'i Island specific to Puna (with collateral effects in Hilo). These increasing demands are based on the impending lava flow induced isolation, and aiding our department in maintaining the highest level of EMS delivery to our communities as its needs change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (808) 932-2903 or fire@hawaiiicounty.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



DARREN J. ROSARIO
Fire Chief

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HTHTestimony](#)
Cc: zabal7@upwhawaii.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1016 on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM
Date: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 1:18:39 PM
Attachments: [SB1016](#)

SB1016

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for HTH on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room CR414

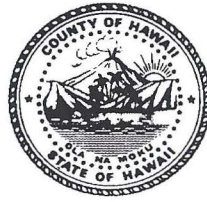
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Al Lardizabal	United Public Workers	Support	No

Comments:

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From the office of -
Council Member
District 4 - Puna Makai



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Email: gilagan@hawaiiicounty.gov

GREGGOR ILAGAN

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 3, 2015

The Honorable Josh Green, Chair
And Members of the Committee on Health

Dear Senator Green and Committee members,

On behalf of the residents of Puna, I am grateful for your support for an advanced life support ambulance, and I ask that you recommend approval of Senate Bill 1016 on second reading.

There has long been a dire need for an ambulance to serve this fast-growing district, and now that need has become even more critical.

Today, an active lava flow is about 630 yards upslope of Highway 130. Across the highway from the potential crossing point is the Pāhoa Fire Station. The loss of access to the highway, and the fire and police stations, will have a tremendous impact on the ability of emergency medical service personnel to respond to life-threatening emergencies.

Even if the fire station is spared a direct hit, the lava crossing the highway will require a 10-mile detour through gravel emergency routes and private subdivision roads to reach Hilo Medical Center. An advanced life support ambulance will provide increased levels of care and will lead to better outcomes for patients in Puna.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greggor Ilagan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greggor" being more prominent than the last name "Ilagan".

Greggor Ilagan
Council Member

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HTHTestimony](#)
Cc: david@kingdonconsulting.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1016 on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM
Date: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 12:01:08 PM

SB1016

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for HTH on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room CR414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Kingdon, MPH, Paramedic	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This is a critically important resource for Hawaii County. Although I practice as a paramedic on Maui, as an Assistant Professor of EMS for the University of Hawaii I am well-versed in the needs of my colleagues on Hawaii Island. Thank you.

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Cc: ecabatu@hhsc.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1016 on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM
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SB1016

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for HTH on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room CR414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elena Cabatu	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support SB 1016.

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