

**LATE**

**TESTIMONY BY:**

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DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
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**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 17, 2022

3:00 P.M.

State Capitol, Conference Room 224/Teleconference

**S.C.R. 55**

**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONVENE A TASK  
FORCE TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON ALTERNATE EMERGENCY  
ACCESS ROUTES AND A SECOND BRIDGE TO SERVE THE HANAIEI, WAIPA,  
AND HA'ENA COMMUNITIES**

Senate Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports the intent** of this resolution which seeks to improve access and emergency access on the highway system. However, the DOT does not support S.C.R. 55 which requests the DOT to convene a task force to conduct a feasibility study on alternate emergency access routes and a second bridge to serve the Hanalei, Waipa, and Ha'ena communities.

The DOT supports efforts to improve the resiliency of its State Highway System and evaluates vulnerabilities of the State Highway System to the impacts of sea level rise, coastal erosion, climate change, and extreme weather. Since the weather events of 2018, the DOT has invested approximately \$124 million in emergency and permanent improvements to improve the stability of Kuhio Highway Route 560, including approximately \$40 million to address the 2018 landslides and \$35 million for Waioli, Waikoko, and Waipa Bridges. These improvements were proven to be effective when Kauai was hit with a storm event in 2021 that caused a landslide at Hanalei Hills. We found no signs of instability in any of the areas addressed in 2018.

Since 2018, we have been prioritizing resources to better protect the remainder of the route. In 2019, we improved the portion of slope just downhill of the area of Hanalei Hills impacted by the 2021 storms. This \$8 million improvement was again proven to be effective as we had no instability in the improved portion. Since the 2021 storms, we have resourced \$15 million into emergency stabilization, and will finalize a \$26 million permanent repair project for Hanalei Hills that will protect this area from future storms. There is only one other segment of Hanalei Hills that is of concern, and a \$40 million project is already being planned to address it.

Overall, we believe the \$124 million spent on improvements to Kuhio Highway and the \$40 million improvements planned to address the remaining areas of concern on the

route from Hanalei Hills to Wainiha Haena will mitigate the impacts from storms we anticipate to impact this region. Therefore, we do not believe an alternate route nor this S.C.R. is necessary.

When determining the need for a study, please consider the following:

- To provide a truly redundant route, a second bridge and its route to Hanalei Valley would need to be located a significant distance up or down stream of the existing Hanalei bridge to minimize the potential for an event to affect both routes. Considering the terrain and current land uses, any route chosen is expected to have impacts to agricultural lands, conservation lands, and potentially wildlife refuges. Alternate routes will also likely traverse flood zones, steep grades, and tsunami zones. Considering the above, a rough order of magnitude for an alternate access just for emergencies, and not meeting federal or state highway standards, ranges between \$75 million and \$150 million. These costs could increase as additional issues are identified.
- For the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative easement, the steep grades up to 20%, narrow paths that can only accommodate a single lane, and the lack of access across the Hanalei River into Hanalei town would only make this route viable for a closure between Ka Haku Road and the Hanalei Bridge. These areas have and will be significantly reinforced in preparation for the storms we anticipate impacting this region.
- A planning study for a project of this magnitude would cost between \$2 million to \$2.5 million and would require 2 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

# OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

MICHAEL A. DAHILIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

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Testimony of

**Michael A. Dahilig**

Managing Director, County of Kaua'i

Before the

**Senate Committee on Transportation**

March 17, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.

Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of

**SCR 55 / SR 50**

**Requesting the Department of Transportation to Convene a Task Force  
to Conduct a Feasibility Study on Alternate Emergency Access Routes  
and a Second Bridge to Serve the Hanalei, Waipa, and Haena Communities**

Honorable Chair Lee, Honorable Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kauai offers comments on Senate Concurrent Resolution 55 and Senate Resolution 50 which requests the Department of Transportation to convene a task force to conduct a feasibility study on alternate emergency access routes and a second bridge to serve the Hanalei, Waipa, and Haena communities.

While the County of Kauai is always supportive of opportunities to increase dialogue, we offer concern that not all parties who have interest or would be directly impacted have been included as stakeholders.

In addition, it is not clear whether a second bridge would necessarily facilitate emergency access and may contribute to the unintended consequence of increasing visitor impacts at a time when we are focusing on destination management.

The Hanalei Bridge has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978 and the Hanalei River was designated an American Heritage River in 1999. Preserving what makes Hanalei and the north shore of Kauai special while strengthening our resiliency should be carefully considered.

We appreciate the Legislature's efforts in addressing this issue and working to improve the safety and quality of life for our residents and the experiences of our visitors.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify with comments on SCR 55 and SR 50.



**TO:** Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair  
Committee on Transportation (TRS)

**FROM:** Kiersten Faulkner, Executive Director  
Historic Hawai'i Foundation

**Committee:** Thursday, March 17, 2022  
3:00 p.m.  
Via Video Conference and Conference Room 224

**RE: SCR 55/SR 50**  
**Requesting DOT Task Force on Feasibility Study on Alternative Emergency Access Routes and Second Bridge to Service Hanalei, Waipā and Hā'ena Communities**

On behalf of Historic Hawai'i Foundation (HHF), I am writing **in opposition to SCR 55/SR 50** in its current form. The resolution requests the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) to convene a task force of community stakeholders to conduct a feasibility study on alternate emergency access routes and second bridge to serve the Hanalei, Waipā and Hā'ena communities on the island of Kaua'i.

Historic Hawai'i Foundation is a statewide nonprofit organization established in 1974 to encourage the preservation of sites, buildings, structures, objects and districts that are significant to the history of Hawai'i. HHF works closely with communities and government agencies on assessing potential effects on historic properties when proposed actions may affect the historic significance and integrity of these resources.

HHF has worked with HDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on numerous projects that affect the historic Kūhiō Highway from Princeville to Hā'ena. Recent consultation has included the emergency responses to both the 2018 and 2021 flood and landslide events, as well as other projects affecting the Hanalei, Wai'oli, Waipā, Waikoko and Wainiha Bridges.

The entire road corridor from Princeville to Hā'ena was listed on the Hawai'i Register of Historic Places in 2002 and the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. It is truly a special and significant place important to both the island of Kaua'i and the entire pae 'āina of Hawai'i.

Historic Hawai'i Foundation agrees that it would be prudent and desirable for HDOT to conduct an evaluation and propose recommendations to address emergency preparation, response, mitigation and resilience measures. We also agree that a community-led task force of stakeholders should work with HDOT on this effort. Such a task force should include heritage advocates and preservation experts, including the State Historic Preservation Division and the Hanalei Roads Committee.

However, HHF is concerned that the proposed resolution assumes a predetermined outcome of a second bridge. While that may be one of the alternatives to be studied, it should not be assumed to be the most feasible or highest performing of the options. The community has engaged in prior planning efforts, both to address resilience and protection of the North Shore's historic, scenic, cultural and natural qualities. Such past planning efforts should inform and guide current issues and challenges; the resolution should not be used to negate or undermine these efforts.

HHF therefore recommends that the resolution be amended:

- To add historic preservation stakeholders and experts to the task force composition; and
- To broaden the scope and mandate for the study to be less prescriptive and more open to alternatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

In support of SCR 55:

I write as a member of the Hanalei Business Community and for myself personally.

My name is Michael Ching. Except of being away to college for a 4-year period and then working for a year in Washington State, I have always lived in Hanalei. I witnessed many natural disasters in my life time. However back then, the population was smaller, and the Hanalei area was mostly agrarian. Tourism was not the focus until the mid-70's, at which time population growth occurred.

In the last few years, the natural disaster seems to come more often and far more severe. The State first attempted to stabilize the hill, which had the road closed with just one lane for ingress and egress. In April 2018, we had one of the worst rains, which caused the hill to slide and again long waits with one lane of traffic in and out of Hanalei. The work spilled over to 2019, which was so difficult to the business and our elderly residents. Simply getting to/from work was so difficult. Getting children to/from Hanalei School was difficult at best.

After a week of rain in March 2021, we experienced one of the worst landslides on the Princeville Hill. Our community was completely shut out for about 4 days then limited access via boating across Hanalei River. The road was limited to one lane traffic three times a day from March until October 2021.

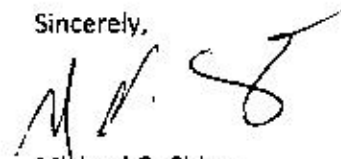
In 2022, our population has grown, commerce has grown, as well employment opportunities. Our aging population has also continued to grow, I am now a senior citizen. I am still active in the business community.

I support SCR no. 55. We should start a feasibility study today and not next time there is a natural disaster that locks our community out. An emergency route and second bridge is need to insure the health, safety, and welfare of both our residents and visitors. For instance, several of us had planned to receive the Covid 19 vaccine in March. It was a challenge getting to the clinics to get the vaccination. Providers could not come to Hanalei to administer the vaccines.

Please vote in favor of SCR no. 55.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Michael G. Ching  
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