
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO REMOVE THE OCEAN SAFETY AND LIFEGUARD SERVICES DIVISION FROM THE EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND ESTABLISH IT AS A NEW, SEPARATE DEPARTMENT.

1 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Emergency Services Department
2 currently consists of the Honolulu Emergency Medical Services
3 Division, Honolulu Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division,
4 Health Services Branch, and Community Outreach Response and
5 Engagement Branch; and

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7 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Emergency Services Department is
8 responsible for the safety of the one million residents of Oahu
9 and approximately ten million annual visitors; and

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11 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
12 staffs forty-one towers around Oahu and conducts patrols with
13 trucks, jet skis, utility task vehicles, and all-terrain
14 vehicles to keep Oahu residents and visitors safe; and

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16 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
17 partners with many first-responder organizations; and

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19 WHEREAS, the Revised Charter of the City and County of
20 Honolulu designates the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services
21 Division as the primary responder for emergencies arising on the
22 beach and in the nearshore waters of the island of Oahu, which
23 features two hundred twenty-seven miles of coastline; and

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25 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
26 is divided into five operational districts:

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28 (1) The South Shore (from the Pearl Harbor entrance to
29 Maunalua Bay);



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(2) The Windward Coast (from Maunalua Bay to the Kailua side of the Mokapu Peninsula);

(3) The North Shore (from the Kaneohe side of the Mokapu Peninsula around Kahuku Point all the way to Kaena Point);

(4) The Leeward Coast (from Kaena Point down to the Pearl Harbor channel entrance); and

(5) Hanauma Bay; and

WHEREAS, each of the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division's five operational districts is staffed by a captain, three lieutenants, and between twenty-one to sixty ocean safety officers, or lifeguards; and

WHEREAS, each operational district uses tower and mobile units to provide ocean safety service; and

WHEREAS, with some minor exceptions, most mobile units are currently staffed from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and towers operate from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division currently employs two hundred thirty-five full-time lifeguards and thirty-seven contract lifeguards, for a total force of two hundred seventy-two lifeguards, and has an annual operating budget of \$19,800,000; and

WHEREAS, nearshore waters extend from the shoreline to one mile off shore, which is where the vast majority of ocean recreation activities occur; and

WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division is challenged with maintaining service levels by an ever-increasing amount of ocean activity, particularly with the introduction of kayak rental operations, stand-up paddling activities, and surf instruction operations; and



1 WHEREAS, with the amount of responsibility that it bears
2 and the scope of its duties, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard
3 Services Division warrants becoming a separate department within
4 the City and County of Honolulu; now, therefore,
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6 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
7 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
8 Session of 2023, the Senate concurring, that the City and County
9 of Honolulu is urged to remove the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard
10 Services Division from the Emergency Services Department and
11 establish it as a new, separate department; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor of the City and
14 County of Honolulu and Honolulu City Council are urged to work
15 together to establish the new department pursuant to section 4-
16 202 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu;
17 and
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
20 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City
21 and County of Honolulu, Chairperson of the Honolulu City
22 Council, and Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services
23 Department.

