
HOUSE 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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- 1 (2) The Windward Coast (from Maunalua Bay to the Kailua
2 side of the Mokapu Peninsula);
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- 4 (3) The North Shore (from the Kaneohe side of the Mokapu
5 Peninsula around Kahuku Point all the way to Kaena
6 Point);
- 7
- 8 (4) The Leeward Coast (from Kaena Point down to the Pearl
9 Harbor channel entrance); and
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- 11 (5) Hanauma Bay; and
- 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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41 WHEREAS, with the amount of responsibility that it bears
42 and the scope of its duties, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard



1 Services Division warrants becoming a separate department within
2 the City and County of Honolulu; now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
5 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
6 Session of 2023, that the City and County of Honolulu is urged
7 to remove the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division from
8 the Emergency Services Department and establish it as a new,
9 separate department; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
12 Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of
13 Honolulu, Chairperson of the Honolulu City Council, and Director
14 of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department.

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OFFERED BY: _____



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