

TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2445

RELATED TO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

February 7, 2024

Aloha, Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and Committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21. I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole and the over 6,000 residents and families that live in Pacific Palisades in Pearl City. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB2445, that would require the Department of Transportation to build an emergency egress road that could potentially save thousands of lives if a disaster occurred in Pacific Palisades allowing for evacuation of residents and access for emergency response vehicles.

Pacific Palisades is extremely vulnerable to a natural disaster such as hurricane high winds and flash flooding. With lessons learned from the Lahaina fires, a fast-moving wild fire could destroy the entire Palisades community. The community is built on a plateau above the main portion of Pearl City and the only access road to the area is Komo Mai Drive is a one lane, winding steep road, with a hairpin turn at the base of Palisades. There are two major vulnerabilities for the residents of Palisades: (1) a stream that runs under Komo Mai Rd at the lower elevation of the road subject to possibly a flash flooding taking out the road and (2) many of the homes are built on the peripheral are unable to build fire breaks because their property is right to the edge of those peripheral residential properties.

As my Vice Chair Charmaine Doran stated in her testimony, over the past two decades, the residents of Palisades have been held captive to water main breaks, tree fallings, two actual hostage crises events, road flooding, traffic accidents, police shootings/investigations and much more requiring closing Komo Mai Drive the only access road to Palisades. These events have impacted thousands of residents who were unable to return home or even leave their neighborhood, waiting for hours to receive the all clear for the road to open to residents.

I most strongly urge you to pass SB2445. The residents in Pacific Palisades desperately require this emergency egress route to be built and thank you for the language in this bill. Mahalo!

Larry S. Veray

SB-2445

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:05:23 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/8/2024 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Ferreira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The last time a subject like this was broached was the Makakilo Extension. This has dragged out 30+ years and even with the Government making available highway funds to build it, the City and County say it is too expensive to build 4000 linear feet of extension to connect to North South Road. Nothing will come from a study to see what it would cost to provide an alternative ingress and egress to Pacific Palisades. Until the Makakilo Extension is built, there is no hope for any other similar yet bigger projects.

Michael Ferreira

SB-2445

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:50:23 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/8/2024 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Palisades resident and member of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board I strongly support this bill. Community engagement is also important as they may have creative solutions.

LATE

My name is Roy Sakamoto.

My parents moved to Palisades back in 1964. I lived in Palisades from 1964 til 1986 then moved to Oxnard, CA then Camarillo, CA.

Having lived through the Thomas Fire and several other fires in southern CA the prospect of a fire in Palisades truly frightens me having only a single road to exit Palisades. The Santa Ana Winds would drive the fires up hills and carry embers far distances which then started new fires. It was eerily similar to what occurred in the Lahaina Fires.

I strongly recommend everyone watch the movie documentary "Bring Your Own Brigade" which documents the Camp Fire that ravaged the city of Paradise and the Malibu Fire.
(<https://www.bringyourownbrigade.com/>)

There's a moment in the movie of a 911 recording of a women stating her side mirror on her car was melting as she was attempting to leave the city of Paradise. A tree had fallen and blocked the exit road. The movie documents the CA Fire Chief's struggles in determining where to assign manpower during both these large fires.

The recent Mililani Fire brought back memories of the CA fires that I lived through. I walk most mornings along Komo Mai Drive. At one section just below the 2nd BoW water tank I could see the flames of the Mililani fire from Komo Mai as I looked west. I posted photos of those flames on the Neighborhood app.

Besides fires, I also witnessed the first hand destruction of a tornado that came up Aupaka St back in 1980 or '81. Fortunately, school was still in session so there weren't any children walking or driving home and others were still at work. However, if that happened in the evening with short notice, I doubt many people would've been able to safely exit Palisades to avoid that tornado.

I also have memories of my mother not being able to get home due to a gunman opposite the hill from Children's House on Komo Mail Dr. I believe that was around 1975 or so.

Besides these life threatening incidences there's also the traffic around 7:30a of cars backed up from Waimano Home Road on Komo Mai Dr back to near the gulch past Children's House.

I suspect the population in Palisades has grown by 1.2X or more compared to back when my parents first moved into Palisades. I base this on the sheer # of cars parked on both sides of the road which mom's home sits on. There were no 2 story homes while I was growing up in Palisades. Just looking down my street, I'd estimate every 5th home is a 2 story home. Many remaining 1 story homes have been extended to accommdate extended families.

Based on the sheer population growth in Palisades and the past natural and manmade threats I strongly feel a 2nd road out of Palisades is necessary.

What is the current building code for # of entry/exit roads per # of houses in a development? I suspect Palisades doesn't meet that code.

I truly hope something is done to avoid a tragedy like the Camp/Paradise occurs to Palisades. Even if a fire doesn't start in Palisades, like that Mililani fire, it could've easily been blown into Palisades had the winds continued.

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns regarding the need for a 2nd road out of Palisades.

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