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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
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STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2016 HD1,
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 26, 2024

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **COMMENT** on HB 2016 HD1.

This bill would appropriate funds for the installation of a new emergency siren in the Pacific Palisades area of O'ahu.

Our concern with this bill is that appropriating funds for specific sirens may reduce resources for other sirens in the system that also require attention. It would be beneficial to have funds accessible for the entire system, which would benefit communities throughout Hawai'i based on statewide priorities.

HI-EMA recognizes the value of the siren system as an emergency alert tool, and the Pacific Palisades community's concern over having an inoperable siren. The existing siren requires replacing a frozen motor and a pole damaged by dry rot. A work order has been issued for the repair of the Palisades siren, forecasting site work and augering to begin in October 2024.

HI-EMA does have concerns and would like to provide the following comments:

- Certain places in the Honolulu through Ko'olina areas have already been designated for siren installations (7 ct), with work to be completed by 2025
- Once installed, siren specs are placed at a 300 feet distance, having 121 decibels; those within 150 feet will be able to clearly hear sirens being activated.

- The closest emergency siren is located at Pearl City High School.
- The next siren in close proximity is positioned at the Pearl City District Park.

Although sirens are the most recognizable means of providing emergency alerts, they are only one tool in the emergency notification toolbox, which includes alerts via multiple communication pathways such as television, radio, and mobile phones.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comments on House Bill 2016 HD1.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300

**TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY**

TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2016 HD1

RELATED TO EMERGENCIES

February 24, 2024

Aloha, Chair Yamashita, Vice Kitagawa 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 HB2016 HD1, that would acquire funding to replace the Pacific Palisades emergency siren that has been inoperable for many months that is totally unsatisfactory for a very important alert system for our residents.

Although, HIEMA had planned to replace this siren in late 2024, I most strongly request that you approve funding to replace this siren with the most advanced technology siren that allows direct verbal audible commands from the Emergency Management Offices to alert and warn our Pearl City residents in Pacific Palisades during emergency preparedness exercises and potential disasters.

For a long-term plan, HIEMA requires more funding to have allocate spare sirens. It is totally unsatisfactory that our state can't replace or repair a siren within 30 days of failure. Our state continues to have numerous problems with sirens inadvertently activating and concerning residents. These older generation sirens require replacement. Please allocate long term funding for this agency.

We most strongly urge you to pass HB2016 HD1. The residents in Pacific Palisades desperately require this new technology siren that will provide our residents with advanced warning because they just can't rely on their cell phones and TV for warning. Mahalo!

Larry S. Veray

HB-2016-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 9:08:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shawne Schmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is very import to have the emergency sirens working properly for the safety of our community. We have to keep our community safe, our keiki, pets, and kupuna.

HB-2016-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 3:54:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Personally and as a member of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board I strongly urge you to pass HB2016 HD1. The residents in Pacific Palisades desperately require a working replacement siren that will provide my fellow residents living higher up with advance warning.

In addition, we most strongly urge you to approve funding to replace this siren with the most advanced technology siren that allows direct verbal audible commands from the Emergency Management Offices to alert and warn our Pearl City residents in Pacific Palisades during both emergency preparedness exercises and potential disasters. This is an opportunity to pilot new technology while meeting an immediate need.

Please pass HB2016 HD1. Mahalo.

HB-2016-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 7:07:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah A K Poepoe Sakamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Pacific Palisades area has only one emergency siren, which has been broken for many many years. I have written to Hi-EMA (originally to Civil Defense) multiple times, only to have been ignored -- including right after the Lahaina wildfires when the subject of sirens was a hot topic of discussion. Right now, on the first of the month when the sirens are tested, maybe if the wind is blowing the right way, maybe we can hear a faint siren in the distance. That's not enough. I have heard it said that having a siren is really not needed in today's world with cell phone alerts, etc. That alone is not an answer. The children (and probably staff) at Palisades Elementary do not have mobile devices on them at all times, if at all. The many kupuna who live in Pacific Palisades may not carry mobile devices on them at all times, if they even have mobile devices at all. So, the premise of sirens not being needed during modern times is wrong and insufficient. A replacement siren needs to be installed. We had one, we need it back. We have gone far too many years without one. Also, we adults who grew up in Hawaii know to turn on the radio or TV should a siren be heard. (Example: Hurricane Iniki.) Sirens are a very effective means of communicating emergencies to the public. Please get ours replaced soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-2016-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 1:43:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Kacatin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Speaking as a resident of Pacific Palisades, the necessity of an active working and WELL MAINTAINED Civil Defense Siren cannot be over-looked. It is simply not effective nor is it responsible for the State of Hawaii to think Palisades residents should be able to rely on a distant neighboring siren the next mountain ridge over as their warning siren.

HB-2016-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 7:17:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorrin Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support