

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that since January 2021,
2 only one passenger airline, Mokulele Airlines, has provided
3 service to the general public out of Molokai airport. Molokai
4 is a small, rural island, and its residents rely on air service
5 for essential travel, including work, medical appointments, and
6 family visits. Any disruption of service by Mokulele Airlines
7 leaves residents stranded without any other air service for
8 essential travel.

9 The legislature further finds that there has been urgent
10 and growing concern regarding ongoing issues with Mokulele
11 Airlines, including frequent delays and cancellations, which are
12 forcing residents to resort to unsafe, makeshift transportation
13 options. In one recent example, Mokulele Airlines grounded its
14 fleet and operations on Molokai on January 15, 2025. As a
15 result, one resident shared how she and others resorted to
16 renting a boat at 4:00 a.m. to return home and transport
17 medications to Molokai. The same boat later transported another



1 resident with a punctured lung on a grueling three-hour trip to
2 Honolulu for emergency care. Other residents resorted to
3 renting boats to reach Maui, driving from Lahaina to Kahului,
4 and paying additional money for Hawaiian Airlines flights to
5 Honolulu, and repeated the process in reverse to return. School
6 sports teams also endured three-hour boat rides to participate
7 in tournaments on Oahu. These examples highlight the severity
8 and unacceptability of the situation.

9 The legislature believes that Mokulele Airlines'
10 unreliability and the lack of alternative air carrier options
11 put lives and livelihoods at risk. Accordingly, the purpose of
12 this Act is to:

- 13 (1) Require the governor to declare a state of emergency
14 and use emergency powers if air transportation service
15 is unavailable, or foreseeably unavailable, to and
16 from the island of Molokai or Lanai for longer than
17 twenty-four hours; and
- 18 (2) Require the department of transportation to plan and
19 design an expansion of the runway at Molokai airport
20 to accommodate larger aircraft.



1 SECTION 2. Section 127A-14, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 **"§127A-14 State of emergency.** (a) The governor may
4 declare the existence of a state of emergency in the State by
5 proclamation if the governor finds that an emergency or a
6 disaster has occurred or that there is imminent danger or threat
7 of an emergency or a disaster in any portion of the State.

8 (b) A mayor may declare the existence of a local state of
9 emergency in the county by proclamation if the mayor finds that
10 an emergency or a disaster has occurred or that there is
11 imminent danger or threat of an emergency or a disaster in any
12 portion of the county.

13 (c) ~~[The]~~ Except as provided in subsection (e), the
14 governor or mayor shall be the sole judge of the existence of
15 the danger, threat, or circumstances giving rise to a
16 declaration, an extension, or a termination of a state of
17 emergency in the State or a local state of emergency in the
18 county, as applicable. This section shall not limit the power
19 and authority of the governor under section 127A-13(a)(5).

20 (d) A state of emergency and a local state of emergency
21 shall terminate automatically sixty days after the issuance of a



1 proclamation of a state of emergency or local state of
2 emergency, respectively, unless extended or terminated by a
3 separate or supplementary proclamation of the governor or mayor.

4 (e) The governor shall declare by proclamation the
5 existence of a state of emergency in the State if air
6 transportation service is unavailable, or foreseeably
7 unavailable, to and from the islands of Molokai or Lanai for
8 longer than twenty-four hours. The governor shall reasonably
9 exercise all available emergency powers, pursuant to this
10 chapter, in coordination with the Federal Aviation
11 Administration and other federal agencies or officials, to
12 ensure the availability of essential transportation services, as
13 determined by the governor, to impacted residents, including:

14 (1) Activation and deployment of the Hawaii air national
15 guard to provide essential air service;

16 (2) Use of private contractors to provide essential air
17 service;

18 (3) Use of air carriers providing cargo service to and
19 from Molokai and Lanai to provide essential passenger
20 service; or



1 (4) If air service cannot be procured or completed, use of
2 waterborne or maritime craft and carriers to ferry
3 impacted residents."

4 SECTION 3. The department of transportation shall develop
5 a plan and design to expand the runway at Molokai airport to
6 accommodate the landing of larger aircraft. As part of the
7 plan, the department shall identify and analyze the most
8 efficient construction technologies available for expedient
9 runway expansion.

10 The department of transportation shall submit the plan and
11 a report of its findings and recommendations, including any
12 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty
13 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2026.

14 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 for
17 the planning and design of the expansion of the Molokai airport
18 runway, pursuant to this Act.

19 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
20 transportation for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

4

INTRODUCED BY: Lynn DeCorte



S.B. NO. 1570

Report Title:

Governor; DOT; Emergency Management; Emergency Powers; Essential Transportation Service; Essential Air Travel; Molokai; Lanai; Runway Expansion; Report to Legislature; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Governor to declare a state of emergency and use emergency powers if air transportation service is unavailable, or foreseeably unavailable, to and from the island of Molokai or Lanai for longer than 24-hours. Requires the Department of Transportation to plan and design an expansion of the runway at Molokai airport to accommodate larger aircraft. Appropriates moneys.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

