

JAN 23 2026

S.B. NO. 2882

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE BUILDINGS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that with warmer ocean
2 temperatures caused by climate change, the development zone for
3 hurricanes in the eastern and central Pacific has moved
4 northward, significantly increasing the potential for stronger
5 storms and hurricanes crossing the Pacific Ocean to either hit
6 or directly affect Hawaii. Previously, Hawaii had been
7 protected by cooler waters around the State and by wind shear,
8 which mitigated the threat of hurricanes. However, ocean
9 temperatures around the State have grown warmer, reducing the
10 number of days during which the State experiences trade winds
11 from two hundred ninety-one in 1973 to two hundred ten in 2009.
12 This reduction in trade winds has dramatically decreased the
13 protection provided by wind shear, thereby raising the risk of
14 future hurricanes.

15 The legislature also finds warmer seas have increased the
16 intensity of hurricanes globally. Crucially, Category 5
17 hurricanes have become increasingly common, with some achieving



1 wind speeds of over two hundred miles per hour. Category 5
2 hurricanes have caused extensive damage to buildings and
3 residential structures. Notably, when hurricane Melissa hit
4 Jamaica in 2025, over one hundred thousand structures were
5 severely damaged by the storm.

6 The legislature additionally notes that the number of
7 adequate shelters in the State is limited. In 2022, the city
8 and county of Honolulu had sufficient shelter capacity for only
9 one hundred thousand people, due to the county's lack of
10 shelters that meet the appropriate criteria in the event of a
11 hurricane. This lack of shelter space, combined with the high
12 risk of damage to residential structures, leaves the State
13 vulnerable to hurricanes and other severe storms. If a
14 hurricane of Category 3 or higher were to directly affect the
15 State, many residents could be left without shelter.

16 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to improve the
17 State's preparedness for stronger hurricanes by requiring
18 certain state buildings, including public school, college, and
19 university buildings, constructed on or after July 1, 2027, to
20 be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as
21 shelters in the event of an emergency.



SECTION 2. Section 107-27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§107-27 Design of state buildings. (a) No later than one year after the adoption of codes or standards pursuant to section 107-24(c), the design of all state building construction shall be in compliance with the Hawaii state building codes~~[7 except];~~ provided that state building construction ~~[shall]~~ may be ~~[allowed to be]~~ exempted from:

(1) County codes that have not adopted the Hawaii state building codes;

(2) Any county code amendments that are inconsistent with the minimum performance objectives of the Hawaii state building codes or the objectives enumerated in this part; or

(3) Any county code amendments that are contrary to code amendments adopted by another county.

(b) Exemptions shall include county ordinances allowing the exercise of indigenous Hawaiian architecture adopted in accordance with section 46-1.55.



1 ~~[(c) The State shall consider hurricane resistant criteria~~
2 ~~when designing and constructing new public schools for the~~
3 ~~capability of providing shelter refuge.~~

4 ~~(d)]~~ (c) Beginning July 1, 2023, where feasible and
5 cost-effective, the design of all new state building
6 construction shall:

- 7 (1) Maximize energy and water efficiency measures;
8 (2) Maximize energy generation potential; and
9 (3) Use building materials that reduce the carbon
10 footprint of the project.

11 (d) All state buildings shall be designed to withstand
12 Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the event of an
13 emergency, provided that they:

- 14 (1) Are fully enclosed;
15 (2) Have the capacity to shelter a large population;
16 (3) Are intended to serve as shelters during and after a
17 Category 5 hurricane; and
18 (4) Will be constructed on or after July 1, 2027.

19 For the purposes of this subsection, "state buildings" does not
20 include correctional facilities, covered playgrounds, or sheds."



1 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
4

INTRODUCED BY: Mike Gabbard



S.B. NO. 2882

Report Title:

Hurricane Preparedness; Category 5; State Buildings; Shelters

Description:

Requires certain state buildings intended for use as emergency shelters and constructed on or after July 1, 2027, be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes.

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